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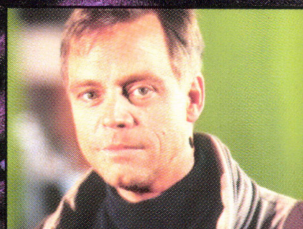
Inside
KINGDOM O' MAGIC

\$7.95/\$10.99 Canada
May, 1996
Volume 5, Issue 10



WING COMMANDER

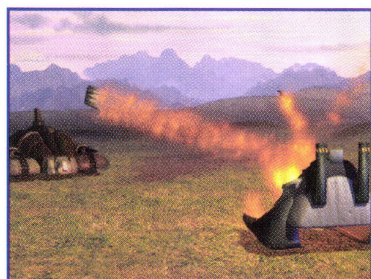
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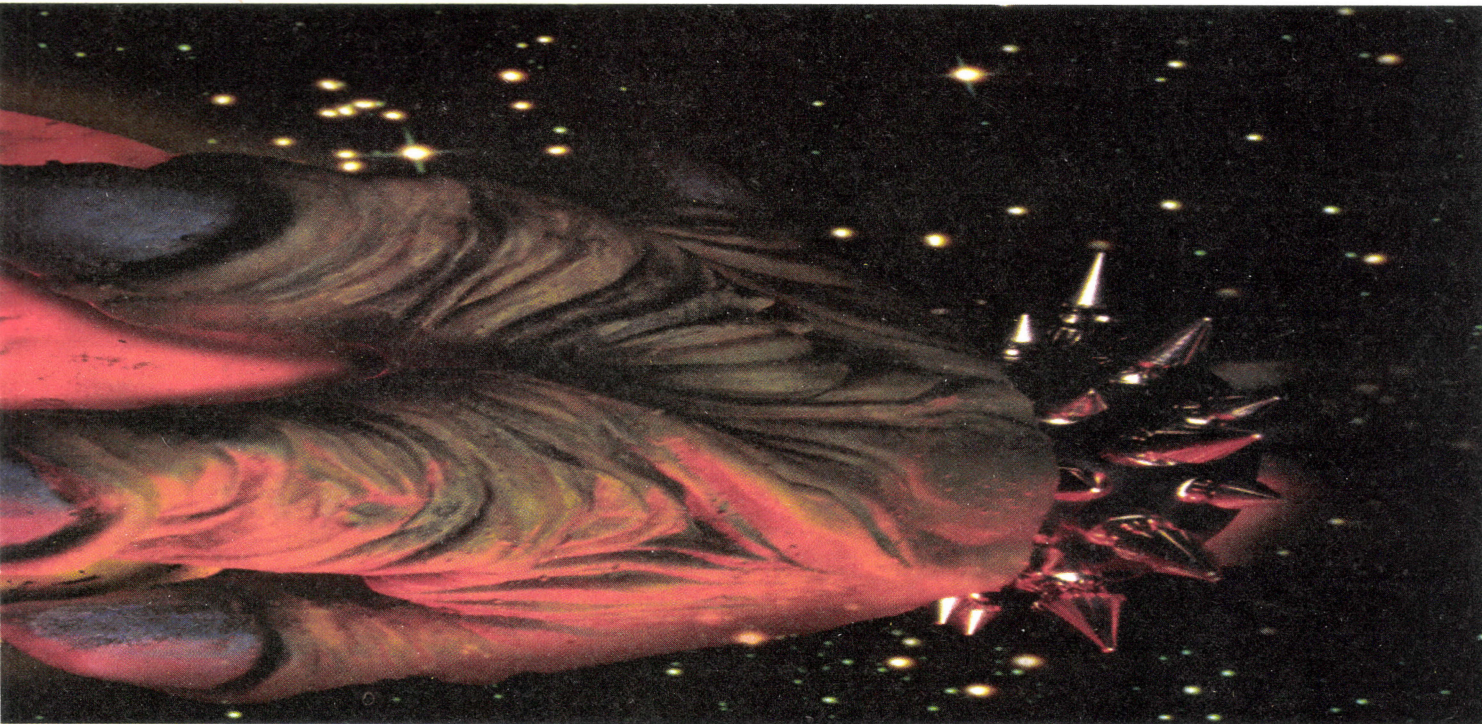
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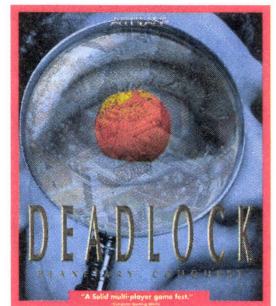
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INITIALS

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themselves atop the endangered
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Duke Nukem likes it!



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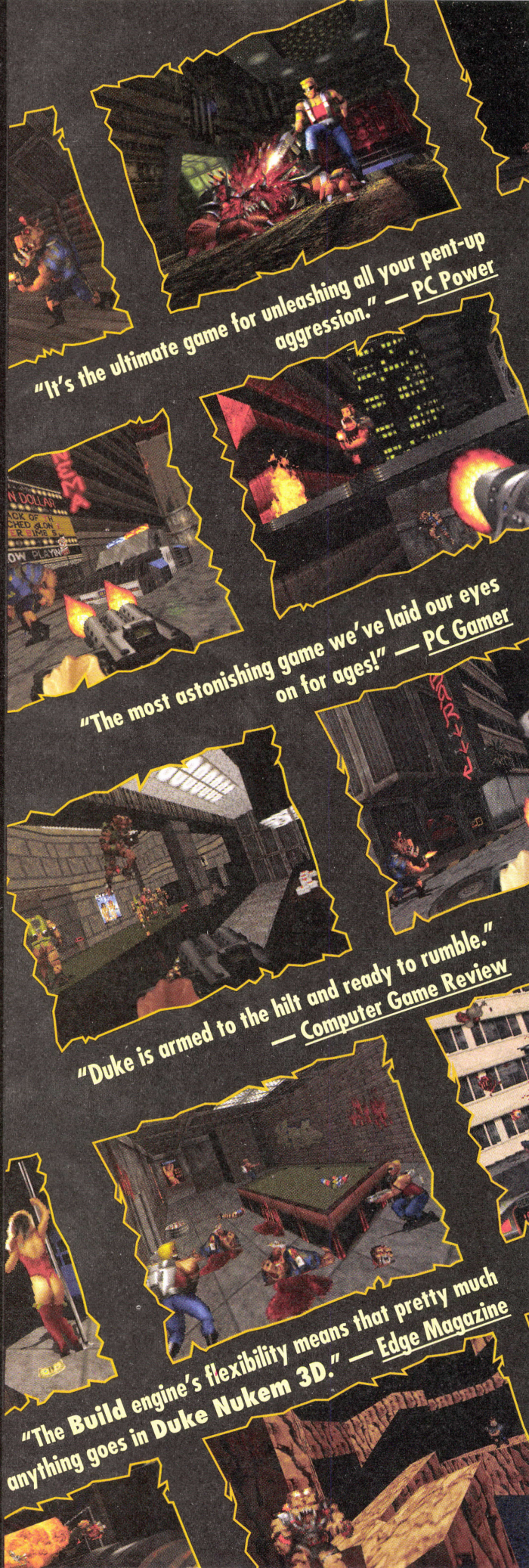
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"Duke is armed to the hilt and ready to rumble." — **Computer Game Review**

"The Build engine's flexibility means that pretty much anything goes in Duke Nukem 3D." — **Edge Magazine**

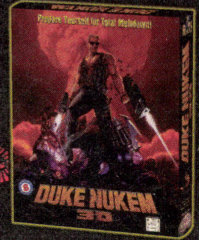
Well, what are you waiting for?

"DOOM is DEAD — long live Duke Nukem 3D, could this be the greatest PC shoot'em-up ever?" — *X-GEN / Next Generation*

"Duke Nukem 3D truly looks like a 3D supermodel of a game: sleek, sexy, and gory with lead-thrashing action." — *Strategy Plus*

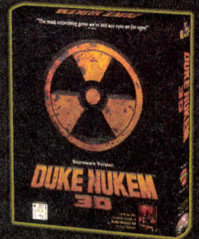
"The BFG was a pop-gun, (it's) got nothing on the sophisticated hi-tech weaponry at Duke Nukem's disposal." — *Computer Gaming World*

"Nowhere is safe from Duke's pounding, lasering action as you fight the alien scum in the streets." — *PC Attack*



Complete Version

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Shareware Version



By Tasos Kaiafas

Hello, Again

As I'm sure many of you will appreciate it, this is for you: "See Mom and Dad, playing video games **is** something worthwhile!"

I say that, of course, with a dose of humbling maturity. Like when you defeat the final boss, (no, I didn't kill Steve Honeywell), creating something that someone else enjoys is also gratifying but somehow differently. Given the opportunity to see a few hundred computer games a year is only half the fun. The other half comes from making a colorful and exciting publication materialize from little more than streams of electronic data. Although my creative process takes on a different form these days (from programming the gameDISC back to journalism), the satisfaction from a job well done remains the same.

The changes you'll see in this issue and in subsequent issues are the thoughts and ideas of many people. Though I may be responsible for fostering these ideas, they are not all mine. One of my top priorities from the word go was to emphasize with everyone involved that this will be a collaborative process. We had meetings and small discussions, joked a lot and vented some frustrations about the way things were done in the past. The job that still lies ahead is only partially completed. But what is most important is that an understanding has been established. We will take what we consider to be the most popular and important elements of this publication and try to improve on them, listen intently to your criticisms and compliments and try harder to bring to you all the games first with the best coverage, criticisms and insight. If this magazine is anything short of the best computer games magazine in the world, please write to me and let me know. If you've never written to us before because you think that we must get bombarded with mail every month and that your letter will just find itself at the bottom of a heap, you're wrong. I read every letter that crosses my desk and have even responded to a few of them personally already. It's the only way I get to hear your thoughts and communicate with you directly.

Besides changes to the magazine itself, there has also been some reorganization of the editorial staff. The three reviewers—Ted, Frank and Scott—remain the same but are joined by Leslie Beyer, the first female member of the *CGR* crew. Steven Greenlee has taken on a more managerial role as our new Coordinating Editor and will be responsible for keeping track of all the material that comes through here each month, among other duties.

We've also brought in Kelt Reeves, the President of Falcon Northwest—a computer retailer that specializes in gaming systems. Each month, Kelt will be providing *CGR* with a column about hardware, which will always relate to gamers' needs. This month, he writes about the effects of video RAM on game performance in both DOS and Windows, and some of the common misconceptions about it.

Joe Kunc1 is a long-time gamer that will be giving us the scoop each month about the online world of gaming. As a retired Chemical Engineer, Joe is now able to spend plenty of time with his true loves—his wife and games.

Among the feature reviews is the latest from Origin's popular series—Wing Commander IV! Ted Chapman gets this one and gives a detailed account of how well the \$10 million budget was spent. Frank and Scott jump in to relate additional points of view. Also, check out the interview with Producer Chris Roberts, and a few words from star Mark "Col. Blair" Hamill. To help you get through the missions, there are three pages of strategy information written by Ted himself.

Scott Gehrs dives deep into the twisting, turning tunnels of Descent II. If you've seen screen shots, they can't relate the improvements made by the Parallax team, but Scott does, with additional criticism provided by Frank and Ted. Adam Pletcher, lead artist for Parallax, tells about his experiences with making the game to Steven Greenlee. Then Scott follows it up with a helpful look at some of the game's 30+ new enemy bots.

Ted also found time this month to take a little romp down to the Lone Star State to get a behind-the-scenes look at Apogee's eagerly awaited Duke Nukem 3D! It seems these Apogee fellas can care less about the nasty response they know they'll get from the game since they're convinced that the positive response will be overwhelming.

Lastly, Frank Snyder talks about his DeathMatch expertise in the counter-part to this column, Log-Off. Replacing Game Over, this page will give *CGR*'s staff a place to vent some frustration, espouse some opinion or simply discuss a concern about the computer gaming industry. Enjoy!

Computer Game Review

Your Complete Source For PC Games and CD-ROM Entertainment

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MARATHON 2

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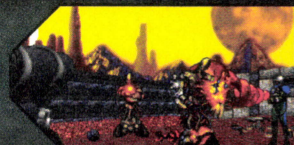
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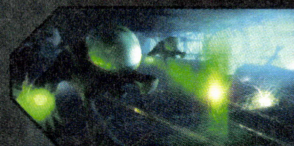
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MULTI-PLAYER,



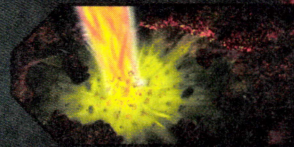
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FEATURES

May 1996

Betrayal of Honor

30 With its star-studded cast of Mark Hamill, John Rhys-Davis and Malcolm McDowell, can Origin's long-running series live up to its reputation? A hefty \$10+ million price tag may have assured the success of Wing Commander IV. By building real sets instead of the usual large blue screen, the actors felt more at home; encouraging them to provide a top-notch performance. Ted, Scott and Frank give it an enthusiastic thumbs up as they all concur that it was big money well spent.

Prodigal Descendant

40 Interplay's action-packed sequel is finally here! The screen shots don't tell the real story at all, but Scott, Frank and Ted do. Besides 30+ new levels and enemy bots, Descent II offers new, more destructive weapons, ingenious tunnel designs and new 3-D graphics from Parallax Studios led by artist Adam Pletcher. Pletcher provided *CGR* with an exclusive interview to discuss the making of the new graphics and enemy robot animations.

Comedy Kingdom

48 Sales Curve International out of the U.K. attempts to improve its reputation with this hilarious graphic adventure entitled Kingdom O' Magic. Leslie leads you through the twisted lands of Flake Town, Minar Tragedy, Baker's Island, Mountain and Delorean with assistance from Scott and Frank, and supplementary information from two of the voice-over actors.

One Step Beyond

80 Ted spends a weekend down in Texas with Apogee and lives to tell you about it, only after finding someone else who orders iced tea the same way as him (no lemon, no spoon). He made it back with a behind-the-scenes look of what could be the next, best first-person perspective game. He also got an exclusive look at Apogee's upcoming title Prey. For those who thought id were the only truly demented ones, you might want to take a closer look at what follows.



Wing Commander IV



Descent II



Kingdom O' Magic

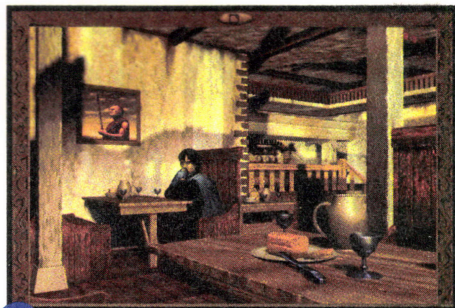


Duke Nukem 3D

PREVIEW PICS



72 AH-3 Thunderstrike



77 Betrayal in Antara



78 Decathlon



76 Hind



73 Twisted Metal

DEPARTMENTS

LOG-ON

- 8 Tasos returns and brings a number of changes with him.



- 14 Some CGR readers have expressed some concerns...and we've listened.



- 20 American Laser Games gives its side of the QQP situation, and other changes the company has recently made.



- 26 Get the ratings on the latest releases.



- 68 See what's in the works so far this spring.



- 84 Check out the latest in the world of multimedia and add-ons.



- 90 Ted covers some good (and not so good) products for your PC.



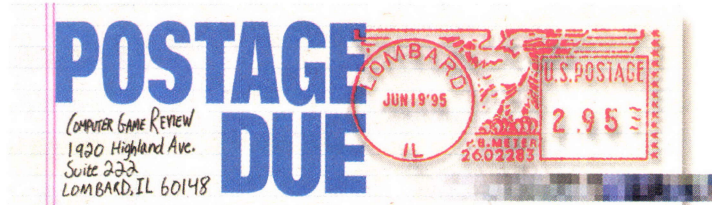
- 94 Kelt gives some tips about video performance.



- 96 Software Roundup



- 98 Frank confesses about his DeathMatch addiction.



Letter of the Month Out With the Old...

After reading over your February and March issues I must admit to being disappointed in the changes you have made to the magazine. Specifically, I am referring to the shortened

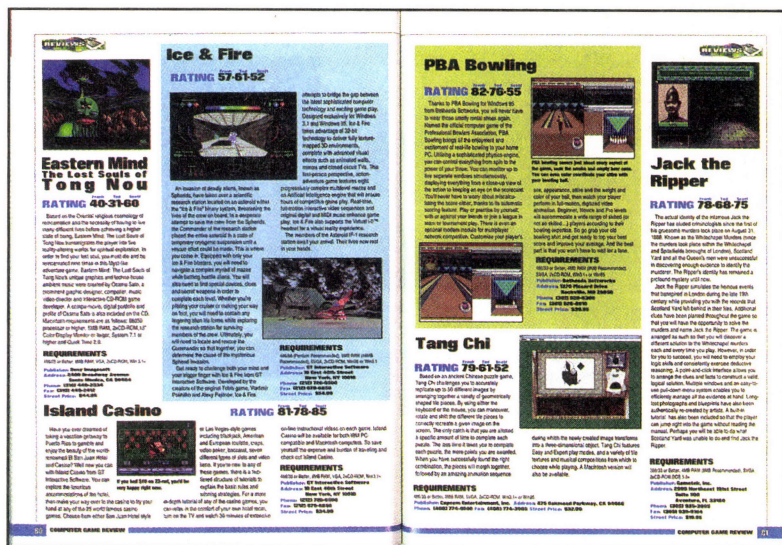
reviews of some games that are receiving only the overall score from each reviewer. These overall numbers without the individual breakdowns for each category are of very little use in helping someone determine if this game they might want to purchase.

As you know, people buy games for different reasons. Some prefer graphics and sound while others want playability or an intriguing story line. Some want a game that is easy to get into while others don't mind sitting down with a manual if it means a more realistic experience.

I have seen your reviewers give a game high marks in individual categories while at the same time seen the overall score for the game not reflect those high marks for various reasons. Conversely, games that may have been weak in their graphics or audio score received fine overall scores simply because they were fun to play. My point is that if a gamer is looking for a game with certain characteristics for their tastes, how can they get any information when they look at a review and simply see three overall scores that say 77-83-72. The descriptions accompanying these scores shed no light because they simply describe what the game is about and say nothing about what the reviewers liked or disliked about the game.

You mentioned that the reason for this change was the high volume of games your office was receiving. I take this to mean that either you no longer have the space in the magazine to accommodate all the games or you no longer have the time to review them all and meet your deadline.

If the problem is space then I have a solution. I will use your February issue as an example. In that issue your first review was Rebel Assault 2. The review was two pages long followed by four more pages of hints and tips for each chapter. Why not use those four pages for reviews? That's



four more games right there. Doesn't the back of the magazine have a section called strategy? Wouldn't that be a more appropriate section for those four pages? Considering that there were two more games in that section that you were offering strategy on, that's a total of three strategy guides in one issue. I can understand during the months when the software slows down and you need to fill the pages. Then by all means put in as many good informative reviews on ALL the games that make it into the magazine. I think it's important to remember the name of the magazine is *Computer Game Review* and not *Computer Game Strategy*.

If the problem is time (yes, you guessed it) I also have a solution. Simply push the reviews back to a future issue. I would rather read a review I can use a couple of months later than read one now that doesn't help me...Therefore, how much more time would it take to include the individual scores in graphics, interface, etc...

Finally, I'd just like to say that this is the sixth time (I think that's correct) that I've written to you since your magazine's existence...However, I've noticed over the years that you do listen to your readers' suggestions and comments and that one letter can make a difference.

Carl Cartwright
Carson, California

I just received the February [96] issue of *CGR* with the new "tweaks" and must voice my displeasure with the micro "reviews" starting on pg. 86.

These are not reviews, all I see are three names with three scores and a DESCRIPTION of the game with the same information that I could get from reading the back of the box. If I may quote a few of your responses to some letters in the same issue "The opinions of the reviewers are simply their opinions..."

By your own definition of what a review is these are not reviews. I can find no opinion to agree or disagree with. So Frank gives Virtual Karts a 72, Ted a 45, Scott a 76. Obviously Frank and Scott thought it was o.k. and Ted hated it. Why? I don't know...Without the comments and OPINIONS of the reviewers there is no review. This applies to all of the games that were simply given a rating. There is a total lack of information on which to make an intelligent buying decision.

I know this sounds like a totally negative letter. I'm just trying to offer some constructive criticism for a magazine that I like. I am aware of the volume of games coming in for you to review, but this format is not the answer. I would much rather see fewer informative reviews than a lot of reviews that tell me nothing...

Scott S.
Toledo, Ohio

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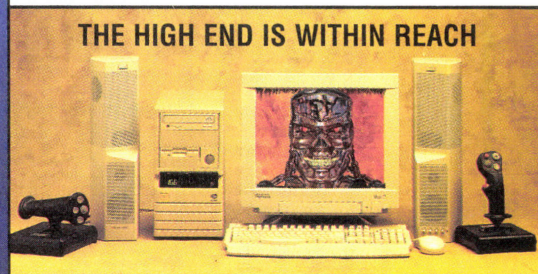
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You see? When *CGR* readers speak, we listen! Carl and Scott are absolutely right.

I really hate to use that "small review" format at all, but there are a number of reasons why we have little choice. One of them, of course, is the amount of games we get every month. Like other publications, we could just review the ones that we want and maybe get to the other ones when we have space. But I have a couple of problems with that.

First off, I want *CGR* to be the most comprehensive computer games magazine available. The most important part of achieving this is reviewing ALL of the games as soon as we get them. If there is a certain game that you are anxiously awaiting, we don't want you to have to exercise patience while looking for its review to appear in our pages. Believe me, I know how hard it is to pass up buying a game when it is sitting there on the shelf in all its shrink-wrapped glory. Sometimes it's too much for you to handle and you take the plunge, other times you turn and walk away. My goal then is to get game reviews out at the same time, or sooner, than the games themselves.

Secondly, some of you may love a certain game that is not very popular, obscure, etc. If we decide to hold that game back for review in the next issue, it is not fair to you. Therefore, we have to try as

hard as we can to review every game we get. Even if we consider a game to be absolutely horrible, it is our responsibility to let you know just how horrible it is and why. Box designs can be very alluring and can fool the unwary consumer.

You buy this magazine to find out what we think about the games in all of those pretty boxes on the shelves, and a simple numerical score is obviously not enough insight as to the quality of a product. Like I said, I hate having to use that format, but it's the only way we can cover every game that comes out.

Thanks to both Carl and Scott for their constructive criticism, and to Carl for his suggestions on how to correct the problem. With all of the new changes in this issue, I encourage all *CGR* readers to write to us to let us know what they like and dislike.

-Tasos

Protect the Children

Why the defensive reply to Carl Bednarczyk's letter in the March issue? While written in a rambling and often incoherent style, the letter raised some good points. The photo in question (a naked woman being disemboweled on a table) is undeniably offensive, especially to the young boys who make up a good part of your readership. Your justification for printing it, "to adequately cover the software" is a blatant cop-out. This kind of thing can be covered in the text, perhaps in the form of a warning to parents. Was your reprinting of the disemboweled fat-man photo an attempt at "covering the software," or just another gross-out pic for the kids?

You completely ignored Bednarczyk's other good point—do we need the porno ads? An ad that reads "adults only" belongs in a magazine that's available only to adults. Have you read the copy that goes with these ads? You are deliberately exposing children to potentially damaging material. I, like Bednarczyk, am no prude, but computer games and pornography shouldn't share ad space in a magazine like yours.

In short, since your magazine is read mainly by boys and young men (I'm 33), why don't you take a little responsibility and clean up the exploitation and violence toward women? In case you haven't heard, this is a major world issue today, and publications like yours contribute to the problem.

Mickey Houlihan
Chicago, Illinois

Discretion is Advised

Although I was working for *CGR* in another capacity at the time that story ran, were I editor at the time I'm not so sure I would have decided much differently. You say that the picture is "undeniably offensive." To you and Mr. Bednarczyk, obviously. To me, and many of our thousands of readers, no, it is not. Disgusting? Of course. And taken out of context for "gore appeal?" I think it probably has gone appeal even in context. I believe it to be undeniably gory even in the game. That's why the props were constructed. Had they used real people I think you could safely say "undeniably offensive." Otherwise, I want to deny it for me and all of the other people who find gore to be entertaining. The reason we do is that we know it's all fake; it's a lot of latex rubber and raspberry jelly. Call me demented, call me evil, but a "quality kill" (if I might borrow a term used by two Chicago radio personalities during their *Drive-In Reviews* segment) always brings out a good laugh from me. I find such gore amusing as do many other adults.

By now your temper is probably boiling over at my insensibility and irresponsibility. But understand one thing. I would not be so defensive if I knew *CGR* to be a children's magazine, as you so confidently believe it to be. I don't know which survey you've seen, but ours tells us the average age of *CGR* readers is about your age (30), most of whom have a college education. This allows us to infer that the majority are probably not so easily offended by gore, since they are mature and intelligent enough to interpret gore as wholly artificial. A child admittedly may not be.

Furthermore, I also understand that some mature, intelligent adults are simply more sensitive than others. As you and Mr. Bednarczyk—and I'm certain there are others—seem to belong to that group, I apologize to you on behalf of *CGR*. Ditto goes for those of you who have children that like to peruse this publication as well, and even to those children reading this that are now having recurring nightmares. I will also admit that using the picture with the naked woman may have been poor judgement since I would expect more people would take offense to an exposed artificial exterior than interior, were they separate.

Ripper is undeniably a very gory game; I think its name leaves little room for doubt. How can we, therefore, expose *CGR* readers who may be fans of gore to the gore potential of this game if we do not show any shots containing such? Tell them about it? Sure, but it's not the same thing.

I truly am sorry for any offense *CGR* may have caused you, but this is an adult's magazine that may be read by children as well. Understanding that, I will be more careful about how these things are displayed in the future.

Additionally, the "Adults Only" ad has been removed per your and others requests. We too felt it had no place in a gaming magazine.

-Tasos

The screenshot shows the CGR website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like Home, News, Reviews, Departments, Feature Stories, and Special Features. Below this, there's a section for "Computer Game Review" with a "News" button. The main content area is divided into several sections: "Departments" with links to News, Press Releases, Reviews, Preview, Hardware, Strategy, and Special Features; "Feature Stories" with a link to "Download Quake Deathmatch Test!"; "Interview" with a link to "James Burke"; and "Special Features" with a link to "InterARC". At the bottom, there's a section for "InterARC Internet Arcade" and a footer with copyright information.

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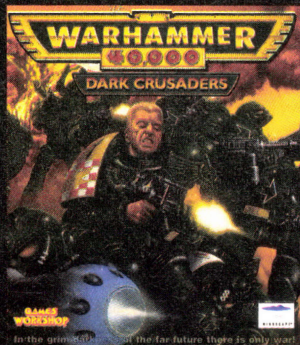


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Damn Yanks Stole Our Ball!

I recently bought your magazine for the first time and thought it was quite good. In Issue 5 of Volume 5 [December, '95] I came across a review of FIFA '96. I was reading the good, the bad and was horrified to see that you said, "British soccer fans give the sport a bad name." I am a football fan and know that it is only the minority of us that are animals. Now, seeming as your country is one of the most violent in the world, frankly I do not think you can complain about a few hundred loonies. Anyway, why do you call football "soccer"? Who invented football? Who did you steal rugby from? Who did you steal Rounders from?

Why are the majority of the games reviewed in your magazine for CD-ROM? I expect a reply to these questions or is that a bit too much to ask for?

Matthew Ford
Leasingham, England

Sorry to Offend, Bloke

You can't blame the Brits for a lack of national pride, even at a young age! Matthew, you're just going to have to learn to chill out. I hate to tell you this, but that is the impression we have about British soccer fans. We don't see any highlight footage of the games themselves; we only see the fights and riots in the stands once in awhile. Besides, it was only meant as a joke in the context of a game review, not political commentary in a news magazine.

I'm guessing your questions, except the last, are rhetorical, so I won't bother answering them specifically. However, you really don't think that American sports—which, admittedly, may have some historical connection to England—have been stolen, do you? How much similarity is there between Rugby and American football, Rounders and Baseball anymore? We didn't steal, we borrowed. Also, I agree that soccer is a pretty silly name, as it is derived from "Association Football."

Lastly, the reason the majority of the games we review are for CD-ROM is because that is now the dominant media. There are very few games that even have a floppy disk version anymore because of the demands of digital audio and video. If you don't have a CD-ROM drive, I'm afraid you're left out in the cold.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the letter I sent to you in March and that there are no hard feelings.

-Tasos

Year in Review for '95

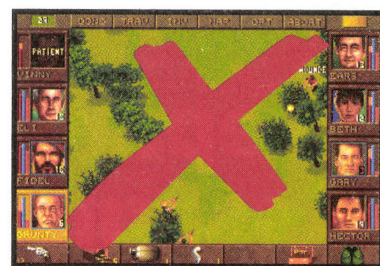
I'm a happy subscriber, about to renew; your reviews are excellent, and for my money Ted Chapman is the best in the business. But I was disappointed in your February "Best of 1995" picks. Don't get me wrong: It's hard to fault Command & Conquer, MechWarrior 2, FIFA 96—brilliant efforts all. Other category entrants made sense, with allowances for differences in opinion. It's just that the general approach smacks too much of Hollywood at Oscar time, when "best" picture tends to mean "very commercially successful" picture. I am a businessman, and I understand that the equation makes business sense: After all, the motion picture academy is financed by the industry, as game magazines are financed by industry advertisements, and they like to reward winners.

Still, this tends to overlook outstanding creative effort, in your case with Jagged Alliance. This was a game that seems to have sold well enough but fell far short of intergalactic hit. Yet it was surely among the three best of the year when it came to complexity, depth, style, superb gameplay, plenty of challenge and wit. Sir Tech gave us combat, resource management, mercs who got on each other's nerves and took off with important gear, an irascible Boss (one day off and Jack was all over you: "You're not much of a leader!"), an opportunity to enlarge our vocabularies (who can forget Magic's "snapperhead?"), a chance to goose our partners, and have enormous fun. My hunch is that JA would have made your shortlist if it had doubled its sales, "proving" that it must have been a great game by virtue of the fact that a lot of people bought it. Hope I'm wrong.

George Fasel
Carmel, New York

Let me start this letter by thanking you for saving me money on all those games I would have bought if it weren't for your magazine. There have been a few I would've bought if it weren't for your magazine. I just finished reading the February [96] issue, and I have only one question about the "Year In Review." Why no awards for EA's NHL 96? Not that I'm disagreeing with your choices, but it's a great game, and the best PC hockey game to date (my opinion)!

Pat Vachon
Ft. Pierce, Florida



One Yea, One Nay

I'm really glad to hear how much you both enjoy our publication, and that George relates to Ted's usually demanding reviews.

And I'm also glad to say that you're wrong, George. What you think about Jagged Alliance is correct, for the most part. I, however, find it difficult to support your position as vehemently as you do. JA is a good game, but I find it hard to place it in the same company as the three games you mention. I will concede that the issue is arguable, but I won't give an inch to your "hunch."

First of all, we rarely ever see sales figures for games around here because we seldom care. Our job does not involve analyzing the performance of a game in a national retail chain, just the performance of the game on our computer systems. The line I like to use is, "We call 'em as we see 'em." This applies to the reviews as well as *The Year in Review*.

Admittedly, all of those games have sold well since their release. But Command & Conquer had been on the shelves for only a couple of months and FIFA 96 for one at the time of our voting. We could not, therefore, have been influenced by their sales figures as much as you think. Games we consider to be among the best of the year usually sell well anyway for the simple reason that most computer gamers are intelligent enough to spend their money on the good stuff (as we know, the same can't be said for the movie industry).

George, believe me so that I may assure you: A game's commercial success has nothing to do with our year-end accolades. JA was a nominee, but nobody felt strongly about it enough to even give it a vote for "Best Game of the Year."

On the other hand, I did consider NHL 96 to be one of the best sports games of the year and gave it my best support. If my memory serves me right, I had even nominated it in at least one other category (best graphics). I consider that game to have set new standards for sport gaming in general.

-Tasos



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Special Update

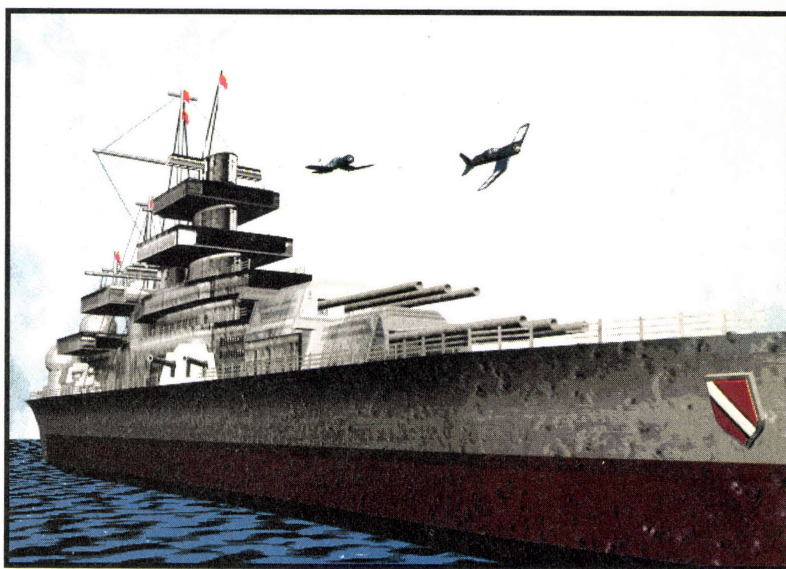
ALG Shoots in a New Direction, Keeps QQP Is the Admiral Lost for Good?

Among the cheers ringing in the new year, a bit of news spread around the gaming world that turned the hearts of computer game fans cold. What at first seemed to be a positive—American Laser Games' purchase of Quantum Quality Productions (QQP) last year—suddenly turned sour.

The QQP staff (all five of them) felt their future turned brighter with the increase in funds brought on by their new relationship with ALG. No longer would they have to worry about paying the bills and could now concentrate on making games. And everything seemed to be going fine until the announcement that QQP would be dissolved. Not quite.

A letter to *CGR* (written on QQP stationery) from Doyle R. Burnett, ALG's vice president of operations, clearly states ALG's future intentions. "QQP is not shut down," Burnett reassures. "ALG, which acquired QQP in February, 1995, has consolidated game production oversight from QQP's New Jersey office into ALG's headquarters in New Mexico." Burnett's reason for the maneuver was reiterated by ALG's director of public relations, Gail Rubin, "The change was instituted to speed the development process..."

Communications between ALG in the West and QQP in the East were difficult enough. Add the fact that QQP hired third-party developers to do much of the work, and the struggles to complete projects in a timely manner become evident. The mem-



● Although no QQP personnel are on board, their ship stays afloat.

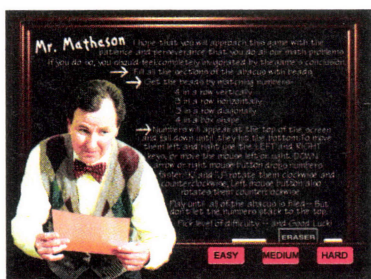
bers of QQP that were let go were offered a "generous" severance. But the games live on, as *Lost Admiral II* and *Visions of Glory* are scheduled for release by the end of the summer. What about *Awful Green Things* from Outer Space? In an interview with *CGR*, Timothy Gerritson, producer of design and development, and Dave Davis, director of development, explained that the game lacked worth and would be shut down. The other titles will incorporate improvements in graphics, audio and (you

guessed it!) manuals, a stigma QQP games carried with them for years.

The QQP situation was not the only change ALG made for the new year; they have dropped their arcade division, those stand-up shooters that were most associated with their name. Gerritson and Davis felt that the style had been taken as far as it could go. Coming from Sega, ALG gave them the freedom to "reinvent" the company. So they brought in industry experts from Origin, Virgin and other game compa-



● American Laser Games plans to release *The Lost Admiral II* as soon as everything gets squared away.



● Her Interactive is the first division to make games exclusively for girls.

nies, and plan to grow the development staff from 34 to 50 by year's end.

ALG has now been divided in two, with the home entertainment titles on one side, including QQP, and a wholly new department called Her Interactive. As the name suggests, Her Interactive creates games for girls, with the first title,

"Communications between ALG in the West and QQP in the East were difficult..."

McKenzie & Co., released this past Christmas. "McKenzie has received a tremendous consumer response," boasts Rubin, "and more than just PC game mags have been inquiring about it." She says that they have been swamped with hundreds of letters a day. The Her Interactive slogan explains it best: "It is our mission to create a multimedia world for girls—a world inhabited by savvy girls with sure-she-can attitudes." The next Her title, Vampire Diaries, will be coming soon, as well as add-ons for McKenzie.

It may not be the same ol' QQP, but Gerritson and Davis sound fairly confident about the new ALG. "[Our] products will blow everyone's socks off!" Disappointed QQP fans will just have to wait and see.

As for Utah Conner, the fella with the handlebar mustache that appeared in so many ALG shooters and military get-ups for QQP? "He's still around," says Gerritson, doing odd jobs around the studios such as building cabinets and guns (a lethal combination) since he knows carpentry and is a licensed gunsmith, and he also does consulting work. Will he be in another game? I'm told that getting him out of semi-retirement might be difficult. Oh, well. Someday all good things must come to an end.

Let's hope not for QQP games. **CGR**

—Reported by Tasos Kaifas

"Watch Your Six!"

Netscape Communications Corporation has acquired an equity position in Voxware, a privately held developer of advanced voice-processing software for the Internet, multimedia computing and communications applications. The investment follows the recent announcement that Netscape has licensed key elements of Voxware's digital voice technology—including the Voxware RT24 compressor/decompressor (codec) and ToolVox for the Web—for incorporation into the Netscape LiveMedia framework.

With such support, realtime voice communications over the internet may not be too far away for online gamers. The application to the number of games is almost limitless. In multi-player flight sims, the benefits are obvious. But even in driving sims (radio to other drivers), first-person perspective death match and others, such technology would relieve gamers from having to take their hands off of the controls. Forget having to stop to speak. Gamers will soon be able to do it on the fly. **CGR**

Overt Piracy?

The Software Publishers Association (SPA) has filed lawsuits against six retail companies for illegally renting software. The suits, filed in five different cities in the U.S., allege each of the defendants rented copies of software without permission. This law is the heart of the 1990 Computer Software Rental Act.

SPA's Sandra Sellers says, "It doesn't matter whether the transaction is called 'rental,' 'buy-back,' 'try-before-you-buy,' 'preview,' 'evaluation,' or any similar term. If the software dealer," she says, "doesn't have written permission from the copyright holders to rent software, it is illegal to do so."

This is just the latest round of SPA legal happenings in behalf of its some 1,200 members. They recently settled five lawsuits against Canadian retailers who violated a similar rental law contained in the Canadian Copyright Act. A year ago, SPA members won permanent injunction and a \$150,000 judgment against Global Software & Associates of Long Island, N.Y. for similar alleged illegal rentals. All of the suits were filed after SPA undercover investigators posed as customers and rented unauthorized software. Some of the companies involved in this latest action include Broderbund, Corel, Intuit, Novell, IBM and Symantec (who own Norton Utilities).

As the piracy debate continues to roll, and the figures for revenues lost to pirates in the Far-East and around the world keep climbing, SPA members hope that such suits will help to quell the rampant illegal distribution of software. Although it may not be an issue of illegal copying, the effects are quite similar. **CGR**

One Goes, One Follows

The National Computer Security Association (NCSA) says that while the Michelangelo virus is now no longer a real threat to computer owners, there is one that is. The NCSA says that Winword.concept virus is now the most common and prevalent virus and that it is spreading fast and causing more problems than any other virus currently out there. NCSA is partly basing this opinion on a quick survey of businesses and industry, but plan on a more comprehensive gathering of data to be announced soon.

NCSA says that eight of the 10 large corporations they contacted have been battling this virus not only on-site but from customers. NCSA reports that the new 1996 year began with a rash of winword.concept calls for help to their technical support units from stricken customers. At the NCSA's recent security conference even Microsoft admitted that they too have been infected and have not been able to eradicate this pesky virus.

Winword.concept is a nasty little virus. It attaches itself to and travels with document files which are more frequently shared than program files or diskettes. This is opposed to conventional and still sound thinking, that most viruses are activated from a .com, .exe, or some other executable type file. Not so with winword.concept. Also, network systems is a nutrient-rich environment for winword.concept because most networks do not inhibit macro virus replication as they do for other kinds of viruses. In addition since Word documents commonly travel as attachments to e-mail the virus tags along infecting the e-mail recipient. Lastly, until recently most anti-virus programs did not run full-time in the background to detect document-based macro viruses. The most fearsome aspect to winword.concept is that requirements for the virus to replicate itself is universal on every computer. It needs no special conditions, events or actions to attack.

"The winword.concept macro virus has apparently grown faster than any virus in history," says Dr. Peter Tippet, President of NCSA. "It seems to have grown from its inception to the number one spot in just six months." Tippet says that the macro virus is also being reported in Australia and in Asia, besides almost all Western countries. It's said that the virus is running rampant in the wild.

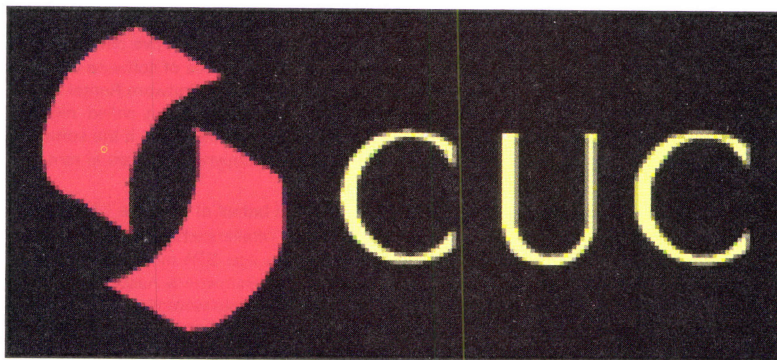
The best advice from the NCSA is to get a full-time virus checker. Both of the more popular anti-virus programs, McAfee and Dr. Solomon, now combat winword.concept. The winword.concept first surfaced in June 1995 and since that time five new similar viruses which infect the macro portion of Microsoft Word documents have appeared. **CGR**

DESTINY CORRECTION: The Interactive Magic game Destiny that was previewed in March 96 was developed by Dagger Interactive, not Interactive Magic. Interactive Magic is merely its distributor.



CUC Eyes Computer Games

There is a new kid on the computer gaming block and it's one of the most interesting new kids to come along in quite a while. Educational power house Davidson & Associates and Sierra On-Line have been absorbed by retailing giant CUC. What? Never heard of CUC? In a way you probably have. They are a membership services company. They sell memberships to places like Sam's Wholesale Clubs and the Home Shopping Network, and for access to travel, auto, dining, home improvement and financial services. They are also the people who put together discount dining books sold by churches and Boy Scouts as well as other non-profit groups. CUC has a clientele of some 40 million consumers worldwide and have dominated that lucrative shopping clubs retailing niche for 20 years. Now CUC is betting the ranch on the computing industry by merging with Davidson & Associates and with Sierra On-line in



● CUC brings big money in big deals for big labels in the gaming industry.

two separate deals collectively worth over \$2 billion. The news of this deal is building like a tidal wave throughout the gaming industry, the retail industry and Wall Street.

"Our goal is to be the nation's leading content provider in the rapidly growing electronic marketplace," says CUC Chairman Walter Forbes. "We believe that Davidson and Sierra's current products and pipeline of exciting services are ideally suited for the rapid penetration of the PC and Internet into consumers' homes. In making the merger announcements, Forbes put forth the idea that he intends to combine his telephonic sales abilities with that huge names database with the Davidson educational software titles,

● Bringing these three powerhouses together, CUC hopes to be at the forefront of the PC and internet insurgence of the home.



as well as their formidable distribution channels and with Sierra's line of hot-selling entertainment games and become a major player in the computer world.

Forbes says that he will use the creativity of both Davidson and Sierra to create compelling online advertisements for CUC's complete stable of products and services. Also, he sees the day when parents might be able to join a travel club and the kids will be able to join, in tandem, a CUC Internet club which will give the access to games by Davidson and Sierra. CUC can use enticements like free software upgrades and discounted toys to encourage the kids to encourage the parents to join a club. It is speculated that CUC wants to become a premier Internet destination as well. Sometime later this year, CUC will introduce a brand name for their Internet concerns. In the meanwhile, Sierra is working on gaming titles that will be exclusive to the Internet and CUC is determining how best to present their new software products to the millions of consumers that purchase their products each year. **CGR**

CPU Sales

Even though you may have heard that PC sales are expected to be slow this year, 1995 and Christmas were still record breaking for the PC market. As a matter of fact, the research firm Computer Intelligence InfoCorp says the fourth quarter of 1995, which includes Christmas, showed a surprisingly strong 49 percent increase from the same time period in 1994. This even though PC industry experts had expected and were predicting a dip in sales citing opinions that the home PC market was saturated. In reality, the home PC market grew while business sales dipped 10 percent for the quarter and retail sales continued to fly high as it has done for the past two years.

As the trend continues, the PC is quickly becoming as prominent a fixture in the home as the Television. As it does, it should, as many believe, become the home entertainment center. Likewise, the number of PC sales will also spur the continued infiltration of major corporations funding PC games, e.g. Wing Commander IV with a \$10+ million dollar budget. Many also believe that eventually PC games will resemble feature film production with the caliber of actors utilized, the grandiose set construction and worldwide distribution. **CGR**

Virgin Sales



It was a very good year for Virgin Interactive. The Irvine, Calif. game maker says in 1995 their top six games sold a collective 1.1 million units and is the best sales record in the company's 12-year history. "These figures prove we know what makes a great game," says Rand Bleimeister, senior vice-president of sales and marketing.

The 11th Hour (the sequel to 7th Guest) sold 320,000 units while Nascar Racing is out there wheeling around to the tune of 220,000 units. Command and Conquer has already past the 210,000 mark and should have a strong showing in 1996. According to PC Data, a leading market research firm, The 11th Hour and Monopoly were listed among the top 10 best-selling PC games this past Christmas season. Some of Virgin's largest retailing accounts are located in the southwestern United States which includes Arizona, Texas, New Mexico and California. **CGR**

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Baa, Baa Blacksheep

Air Warrior On-Line Keeps Pleasing Trigger-Happy "Pappys"

Many things have changed in the computer gaming universe, but one constant remains: It is almost always more fun to play against another human than it is to play against the computer Artificial Intelligence. Now don't get me wrong, most of my gameplay is solo against computer opponents and I spend many hours doing it. But the social interaction between human players is the icing on the cake. No computer AI has been able to capture the surprising, sometimes brilliant, sometimes ridiculous, play of a human opponent.

Since the early '80s another option has become available—online network gaming, and the choices range from text-only games, where your imagination supplies the graphics, to simulations with graphics as good as any retail game on the market.

Kesmai Corp. has been in the forefront of developing online games, and Air Warrior is one of the best. AW has grown since the '80s from a small experiment into a way of life for some gamers. I have known of friendships forged over the modem lines, to romances that have concluded in marriage. I even heard of one person who, after one flight at a friend's house, bought a new computer just to fly AW (at least that's what they claim).

AW's graphical look is a little bit different from most of the air sims you might have already seen due mostly to the extra information that must be displayed for the multiplayer aspect of the game.

Let's climb into my favorite P-38 and take a look around. In the center is the SVGA view area complete with instrument panel, gun sight and appropriate scenery. As you look around either right, left or rear, you'll see the khaki wings and engine nacelle, or the twin tails in the rear-view

mirror. Some people don't like the view from a 38 because the window rails block your view to the sides, but that's the point. Each plane is accurate, and has strengths and weaknesses. Let's move onto the area just below and on either side of the view area. That's where you'll find the game instrument panel.

You have all the gauges that you'll need to make a living in AW—altitude, speed, climb rate, etc.—and let's not forget the radio tuner. You'll see there are 999 channels available. Number One is a common frequency, and each country has its own private channel. Number Two is for covert conversations and plotting may-

arena, so there is something for everyone. As the description indicates, flight physics can vary from simple, fast-paced fun to extreme realism complete with stalls, blackouts and compressibility.

Each arena contains four countries—A, B, C and a neutral one placed more or less in the middle. When you first log-on choose whatever country appeals most. At this point you can either start flying right away or join an established squadron. Either way there are a lot of missions that can earn you points. You might want to take our faithful P-38, load it with bombs and try to take out the enemy's radar tower to blind them for a short period of



hem. The other 998 can be tuned to give you and a friend a private intercom. At the bottom of the screen is a long strip to display messages from other players and for you to type your responses. In either the upper-right or left corners are the most unique feature of AW, the IFF indicators. Each aircraft that is in your view is identified by a geometric symbol, which moves at the top of the view screen as the aircraft moves. The IFF areas show that symbol color-coded for country of origin and matched with the pilot's player number (if they are of your country) or plane type (if not). These colored symbols are also displayed on the radar map, which allows you to locate all nearby aircraft as long as the radar stays up.

The world is divided into arenas, each with its own flight physics and area map. The half-time no-realism pacific arena uses a smaller island-based map, no realism options and runs in fast time to speed up gameplay. The real-time European arena uses a very large continental-based map running in realtime with most realism options turned on. Some special arenas are added to from time to time, like the Korean War arena or the "ultra-realism"

"Kesmai Corp. has been in the forefront...and Air Warrior is one of the best."

time, maybe long enough to manage a sneak attack on their main airfield and crater the runway. Or maybe you see yourself flying top cover for the C-47s as they go in to drop paratroopers to capture the airfield. How about driving a tank cross-country to shell enemy ammo dumps, or possibly as a tail gunner on a B-17—a lot of aces sit behind the twin fifties in the 17's tail. No matter how you earn your kills you get points, more if you can land safely but at least partial credit even if you crash and burn. High-points totals are posted for fighter and bomber groups as well as individuals. The scores are reset periodically to give everyone an even playing field. Although high points are quite a bragging right if you show up at the annual AIR Warriors' convention in Houston, Texas in October. Just another example of the strong social bond online gamers can form. People fly around the world just to put a face to that name they know so well!

CGR

—Joe Kuncel



● Air Warrior has dominated the skies since the early days on GENie.



● Hang out and visit with other pilots over a couple of drinks.

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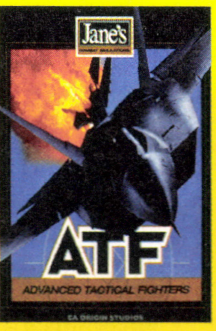
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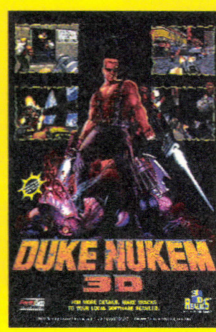
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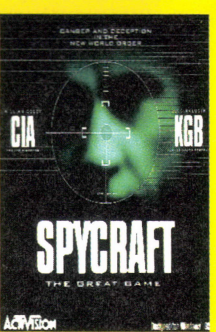
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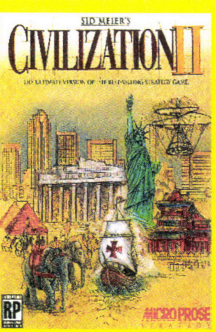
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● Kingdom O' Magic is one hilarious adventure.

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THE CGR REVIEWERS

Frank

Considering himself a DeathMatch pro (see the Log-Off column), Frank prefers action/arcade games and tries to steer clear of war simulations and slow-moving strategy games of that sort. As Frank has also taken over the job of putting together and creating the gameDISC, he's had his hands full. Fortunately, he's also very nocturnal and prefers to hide from the break of day.

Ted

As CGR's new (and first) Associate Editor, Ted likes to play just about any game with the exception of most sports titles. Still in control of CGR's Hardware section, he has been complimented by Kelt Reeves, the President of Falcon Northwest. (See Kelt's Nuts & Bolts column). He played all the way through Wing Commander IV this month. Ted has just bought an old convertible VW Beetle (his all-time favorite automobile) that he hopes to restore by this Summer.

Scott

Like Ted, Scott enjoys playing just about any game. This month, he gave his all to Descent II and had a hard time leaving it behind to go home at night. He also decided to fill you in on the way through the last mission of Mech Warrior II's Ghost Bear add-on.

Leslie

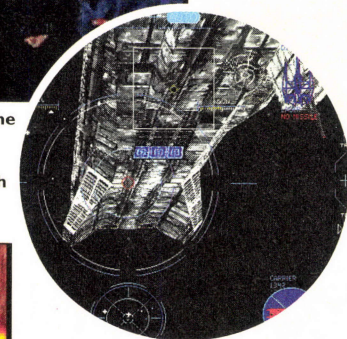
We finally got everyone to behave and let a female join the staff. Little did the rest of the crew know that Leslie can fight back any chiding they can dish out. Being a big graphic adventure fan, she's determined to help equalize the gaming industry and get female gamers more attention. Leslie really enjoyed Kingdom O' Magic because of its uniqueness. As an accomplished photographer, she'll be providing many of the photographs for CGR's convention coverage and other trips.



● The fourth installment of the Wing Commander series does away with the Kilrathi and pits humans against each other.



● It's back to the mines again, and this time it won't be so easy. Descent II adds more to shoot and more to shoot at you, so check out the coverage.



THE CGR BREAKDOWN

Games are rated with a score on a zero to 100 scale and the five sub-categories are rated using a symbol (the key appears below). Feature Reviews also have an average score that is calculated using the three scores of the three reviewers. All other reviews have the score and rating of one reviewer.

●	◐	◑	◒	○
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad

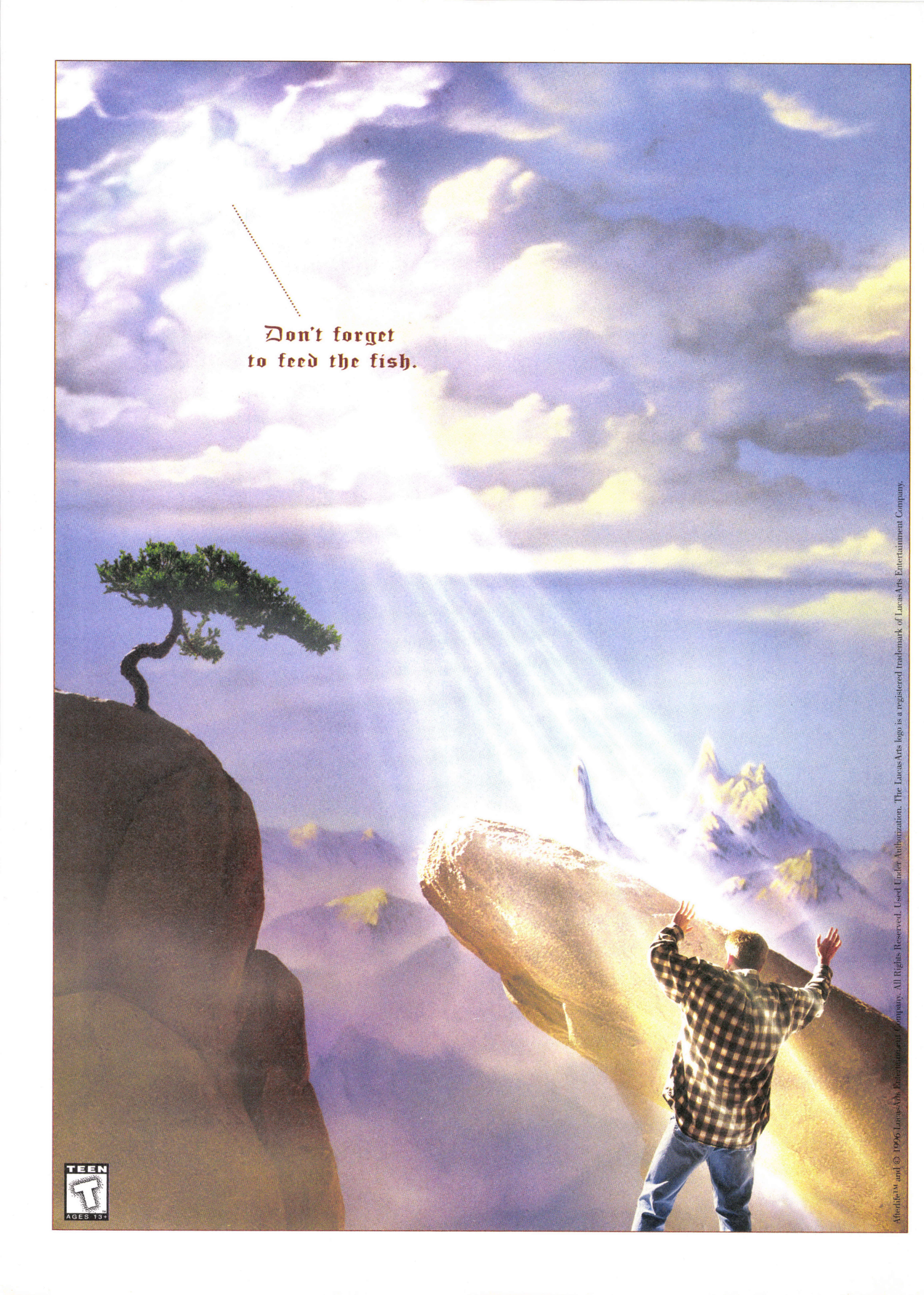
The Golden Triad Award is given to games chosen as a Feature Review that achieve an average score of 90 or above, while the Platinum Triad Award is given to those that receive a 95 or above from each of the three reviewers (not just average). A game chosen for a Feature Review must be considered exceptional by the entire CGR staff or must be popular and anticipated by a majority of CGR readers.





nd on the 8th day,
He split to Maui.





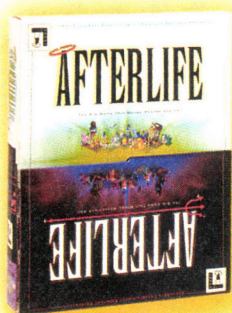
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to feed the fish.





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Betrayal of Honor

Chris Blair Rides Again in This Interstellar Sequel

I don't think I'd be wrong in saying that Wing Commander IV has been one of the most eagerly awaited games on the planet. Hype for WC4 has been approaching critical mass since October 1995, fed by Origin's release of non-interactive teasers and rumors of a budget in excess of \$12 million. This is easily the largest amount ever spent to produce a game, and Origin's gamble looks as though it will pay off, in spades.

The game is visually beautiful, an "eye-popper." The A-list talent Origin secured for this project is substantial; Origin paid well for names like Mark Hamill, Malcolm MacDowell and John Rhys-Davies, and the price appears well worth it in terms of delivering exceptional product. The full-motion video portions of WC4 are well-crafted to drive the story line, and you barely notice the video interface lines after only a short period of play. In fact, if you're one of the lucky few with a big-screen TV and an SVGA-to-TV adapter, you won't notice the lines at all unless you sit incredibly close to the set. WC4 uses 16-Bit color (a 65K color palette) for both its live action and gameflow (digital) video sequences, something that few games have incorporated, and certainly that no other 3-D game designer has ever tried. The spaceflight engine still uses standard SVGA (256 colors at 640x480 resolution) for its high-end graphics mode; a VGA version can be selected for those with any machine more modest than a P-90 with 16MB RAM (or a high tolerance for incredibly bad frame-rates).

The big news though, is WC4's incredible gameplay and attention to detail. While the flight engine will never rival Microsoft's Space Simulator in terms of realism, the basic science-fiction aspects of it have been well designed. This realism (or lack of it) can detract from your enjoyment of the game, but it can also enhance it. Whereas in X-Wing or TIE Fighter you spend most of your time chasing enemy ships around the screen, in WC4 you spend equal amounts of time dogfighting and micromanaging your ship's systems. If



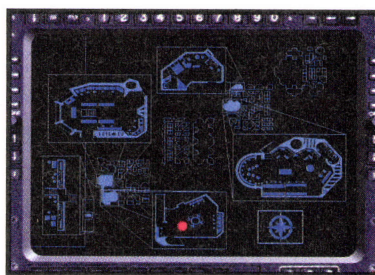
● The TCS Lexington is left behind to die as you make your way through the next jump point.

● The Border Worlds Banshee, a cunningly crafted and exceptionally powerful ship, takes flight as the Confederation prepares to engage in a civil war with the outlying colonies known as the Border Worlds.

you don't become familiar with the keyboard controls for your ship, it is likely that you won't finish the game on any difficulty setting higher than Rookie. Those gamers who have played the other titles in the Wing Commander series will instantly recognize the interface, while those new to the series will have few problems getting used to it (practice makes perfect). Magnificent texturing and shading effects help you dive into this game headlong, barely giving a second thought to your willing suspension of disbelief.

The AI appears to have been given a lift as well. Although Wing Commander I, II and III had some fairly intelligent enemy AI, you could eventually find patterns to the way each type of pilot flew. This is not the case with WC IV. If I had to guess, I'd say that the programmers figured out a way to sew together bits and pieces of the original AIs. This takes away most of the humdrum aspects of piloting, although you'll occasionally find an enemy who doesn't know any better than to fly away from you in a straight line.

The sound is, for lack of a better word, gigantic. The makers threw in 16-Bit Dolby stereo surround sound for a sound that really brings the game alive. Those of you with a



● Two new features are the shipboard map and the Wingman Selection screen.

Counter Point

In every respect WC4 is one of the best all-around computer games that I have ever seen, bar none. The graphics are stunning, the sound is as good as it gets right now, and the FMV digitized film is flawless, with the exception of some infrequent flickering and unnecessary sparkling in spots. One thing that does annoy however, is that with all the hyped-up FMV that there is to be seen, it takes a long time to actually get into the game itself. The story line, although it is not simply a rehashing of the previous Wing Commander stories, does orbit around the same central theme of Galactic distress. The complex tapestry of subplots that is fresh and original, does however give life to the old stories.

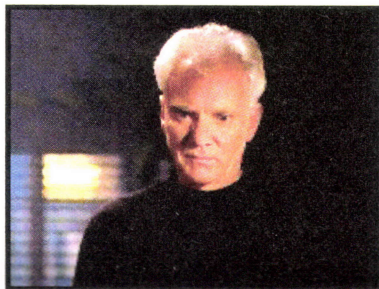
The tactical space combat is exceptional in many aspects including clarity of graphics, an easily mastered interface, and the smoothness of transitions between combat sequences and video sections. As a caveat though, I have to admit that the space combat is marginally drab in that there are not many different visual backgrounds to enjoy.

I commend the designers of the game with a truly excellent manual, though. Not only is it technically excellent, but it is also interesting to read. A rare thing indeed!

Wing Commander IV is an absolutely brilliant piece of software. -SCOTT

● Most of the main players are back for this edition of Wing Commander, but you may not recognize their motivations. Clockwise from top left, Tom Wilson as Maniac, Malcolm McDowell as Admiral Tolwyn, Mark Hamill as Col. Chris Blair, and John Rhys-Davies as the Paladin.

"Origin paid well for names like Mark Hamill, Malcolm McDowell and John Rhys-Davies, and the price appears well worth it..."



home theater system (particularly a Dolby Prologic receiver) are advised to find a good way to hook up your computer to it, ASAP. There is a richness here that, while it will sound great on any decent pair of multimedia speakers, simply shines in a surround-sound environment. Everything from the video sequences to the blasts and explosions which buffet your ship are deep and full.

The storyline is solid from start to finish, typical for most Origin products. You once again assume the persona of Colonel Christopher Blair (portrayed by Mark Hamill), the "Heart of the Tiger" who conquered the Kilrathi at the end of Wing Commander III and ended a war that threatened to destroy the Confederation (for those new to the series, the first three Wing Commander games directly related to this one are all about the war with the Kilrathi). At the end of that war, you retired to the pastoral existence of farming,

vowing to give up war forever. At the start of WC4, however, you receive an unexpected visit from Maniac (Tom Wilson), who informs you that you are being recalled to active duty. He can't tell you anything more about the reason for the recall, but you find out soon enough from Admiral Tolwyn (Malcolm McDowell). It seems that peace has brought new problems to the Confederation. While the war with the Kilrathi united the planets of the Confederation against a common enemy, peace has brought with it a certain amount of

chafing against the strictures of the Confederation's rules and regulations by the Border Worlds. This conflict has only recently come out into the open; a brazen attack by Border World rebels destroyed a civilian transport ship with a new type of weapon after taking out its armed escorts. From this point on you'll be expected to make choices that will affect the ultimate outcome of the game. There are two winning endgames, one major and one minor, and several losing endgames, as well.

Join the Con-Fed Force, Luke

He is a child born of the stars, adventure and a symbol for all things good. Well, not him personally, because Mark Hamill is much more than that youthful defender of the Force he played so many years ago. Now Hamill is busy working on a new comic book and a possible big-screen treatment called Black Pearl. But last year he again became Colonel Blair, and Wing Commander IV is all the talk among gamers everywhere.

This time, when Hamill and his Wing IV comrades Malcolm McDowell and John Rhys-Davies were gathered together by Origin's Chris Roberts to shoot the video for the much anticipated sequel, they got to create the Wing IV universe begun on Wing III using real live sets. "The initial novelty of that sort of open-end story line telling was not as pronounced," he says, "and since we were doing it on real sets instead of against greenscreen, people visiting the set would not have been as aware that we were doing anything other than a conventional movie or television show."

Hamill says that he has seen Wing Commander IV and he understands just how addictive the game can be. But as an actor, he sees the role of Col. Blair as a challenge to portray, and that is what makes doing a computer game so exciting.

What about being a cult figure? Hamill, speaking from his Malibu home, says he doesn't see himself as such. "I don't see things that way," he says. "I try to approach each project fresh, and it's only after the fact that you can see something developing like that." Hamill is quick to point out



that if people say he is playing Blair in a space adventure because of his Luke Skywalker fame, they are just plain wrong. "To me Blair is world's away from Luke. And it is not just 'oh, he's doing the space thing again.'"

In the meantime, Hamill says he knows there's a WC4 movie in the works and that he might be a part of it, but he's not waiting around to let the moss grow around his feet. He is actively looking for that next creative challenge. For Hamill and Wing Commander fans everywhere, hopes are that it will be the fifth installment due out in 1997.

-Steven Greenlee



Wing Commander IV is not Wing Commander III redone. Though the games are tied together through their story lines, you'll find many enhancements in the newer release. As mentioned above, WC4 supports a higher color depth, as well as better sound. In addition, about half the ships are new to the series. Though you got to fly the Confederation Banshee in WC: Armada (an odd duck to include in the Wing Commander line, and easily the worst of the WC games), the Border Worlds Banshee is a completely

different ship. Other new ships include a heavy fighter, the Black Lance Dragon, the Avenger and Vindicator. Each of these ships has its strengths and weaknesses for carrying out particular types of missions, though you'll find that the Dragon is the most formidable single-seater ship yet designed for the series.

There are also several new cannon-type weapons. Leech Lasers are one of the most interesting. Although its name suggests that it leeches power from a ship, what it really does is overloads a ship's power systems, resulting in irreparable damage which can leave the target ship disabled and drifting. The Scattergun is found only on the Border Worlds

Banshee, and approximates the type of damage the combat shotgun does in DOOM II: limited effective range, but deadly in close quarters. The Fission Cannon is a capacitated weapon; the more you charge it, the greater the damage it does. Holding down the trigger for a period up to about 10 seconds results in a blast that can eat through enemy shields and armor in a jiffy. This weapon presents a problem for those not well-acquainted with ship power management, since a fully-charged shot will completely drain your weapon power subsystem. The final new weapon in WC4 is the Stormfire. Basically a small and fast mass driver, the Stormfire is

From III to IV with Chris Roberts

CGR: What is it like doing another installment of Wing Commander? Was it as exciting as Wing Commander III?

Chris Roberts: "Yeah, because for me when I do a Wing Commander it has to be something different. You know, it has to kind of change the sort of texture of a Wing Commander, and so with this I got to make the production side and the production quality a lot higher than Wing III, so that was a challenge—using real sets, choosing the film and basically trying to make everything look and sound better than what we did in Wing III and try to tell a more interesting story. That was kind of cool because you know with Wing III it was...fairly standard, you know blow the planet up in the end, and with Wing IV we could learn from all the positives and negatives from Wing III and do a lot of things...we said this worked in the storytelling or this didn't work in the storytelling and sort of concentrated on crafting a better story."



itself" and we took it from there."

CGR: It also seemed that the actors were more at home in Wing Commander IV. Did you notice that they too may be getting used to the gaming style of acting?

CR: "I definitely think it helps that you played the role once before so you kind of know the role. The other thing is using real sets. I mean, virtual sets are cool for us in terms of the computer because, you know, [we can] model the backgrounds with a computer and everything, but for an actor it's really tough to really get in a scene when it's only him and another actor or actress in front of a greenscreen. Even if they are in a cathedral they are still in front of this dinky greenscreen. And with a set, an actor feels more at

home, wanders around and just gets more into character. I think that really helped their performances. I consciously made a decision to try and take a little more time in filming the scenes than I did in Wing III, so I give them more time to give a better performance. So I think this time around I really wanted to make the story side feel a little more real, I guess, and so I think at all levels that helped. It didn't necessarily feel that way when I was filming it cause I felt like, 'Oh man, got to shoot so much stuff to film today I'll never get through.' But at the end of the day when I was editing some of the scenes together I would look at them and I would be like, 'Hey, you know. This is a lot better than the stuff we were doing in III and wow, my god, I mean like Mark [Hamill] and Malcolm [McDowell] their performances were better than what they were doing in Wing III too.' That's something I'm real happy and proud of."

CGR: So now that you've gotten real sets, real actors and some real serious money, do you feel like you've gone Hollywood?

CR: "Yeah, I like to think that I've taken a little bit of Hollywood and put [it] into gaming and not the other way around. The way I view it is that you know my particular kind of games. [What] I like to do [is] always tell stories, and in the past I used to tell stories with animated characters and now the technology allows me to use live action. Live action! I mean real people! You have a little higher involvement with real people and so I think that live action helps me tell a better story. I think Hollywood has been telling good stories for 80 years and they have a knowledge base and experience that obviously we wish to tap into to make my games better. That doesn't mean that just because you have actors and just because you shoot on film that it's going to be an awesome game because underneath it all it has to be a good game. The way I liken it is when I first started in this business, I [was] used to computer graphics, I [was] used to the sound. I used to write and after a while I decided, 'You know there's better artists than me and there's better musicians than me and there's better writers than me.' So I would try to go and hire the best people in their respective fields to help make my games look better. So now there's no debate. You'd be laughed out of town if you released a game that didn't have real artists doing the artwork for you, if it was still programmer art. It wouldn't get anywhere. And that's the way I view Hollywood, that if you're going to try and tell a story do some live action. If you're not involving the talent base that's out there then you're being silly. That's like doing programmer art or something. I think the sophistication of the audience is going to be demanding, something higher than programmer art."

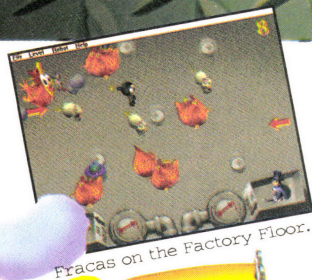
CGR: What were some of the positive things you included in Wing Commander IV?

CR: "It was things like in Wing III how you responded to people, say in the cinematic shipboard scenes [how they] kind of affected the overall morale of the ship, but it was such a hard to gauge thing, morale, so I don't think that many of the players really would know if the morale was up or down. The things that worked well in Wing III, say when you had options in the cinematics was when it directly affected gameplay choices like in Wing III you could choose to joyride in the Excalibur mission early on and you basically say yes or no and if [you] said yes the next time you flew a mission, the Excalibur would be sitting and waiting for you on the deck. So in Wing IV we did a lot of direct choices in terms of, you know, if you made a choice in the storyline it would have directly affected gameplay. You know, which missions are you going to fly? Are you going to fly this ship or that ship? Are you going to put a cloaking device on your ship or not? So almost all the cinematic choices affected something immediate in the game, so you felt like there was a lot more, I guess, feedback for your choices."

CGR: I did notice that the storyline was deeper and richer for Wing Commander IV. Was there a lot more brainstorming for the story or were many of these things elements you had wanted for Wing Commander III that were just able to be included?

CR: "I guess Wing Commander III was like the end of the Kilrathi/Human war and it was a simple black-and-white affair—you know bad guys versus good guys. With Wing IV we had the debate, 'What are you going to do?' Are you going to trot out a new enemy, you know the next Kilrathi and you go, 'that's kind of lame because that's just retreading what we've done in the past.' So let's have a little more fun. The technology and storytelling ability has matured to the point where maybe we can tell a little grayer story and maybe it can be a little more interesting. Maybe you can get some choices in the things that are real but not 100 percent obvious. I think there was a definite conscious decision from early on to try and tell a more interesting and involving story than what we had done in the past. I mean we had quite a few sessions where everyone sat down and sort of brainstormed. I came up with 'Wouldn't it be interesting after the Kilrathi war to sort of concentrate on the potential of civil war of humanity bickering among

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useless as a long-range weapon. However, it produces a nifty and very useful side effect when used against a cloak-enabled ship: It "marks" the target with a tell-tale sparkle that can be seen from 1500 clicks. Needless to say, this feature of the Stormfire is one you will use to great effect in later missions.

The missions for WC4 go well beyond the ken of WC3. Though there are many straight "shoot-em-up-and-give-em-hell" missions that Wing Commander veterans will expect to see, you'll also need to fly reconnaissance and

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: Origin

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CGR Rating 95

Frank 96

Originality ●
Playability ●
Visuals ●
Audio ●
Manual ●

"The Wing Commander series has not lost steam, and continues to up the ante for other space-combat simulators."

Ted 92

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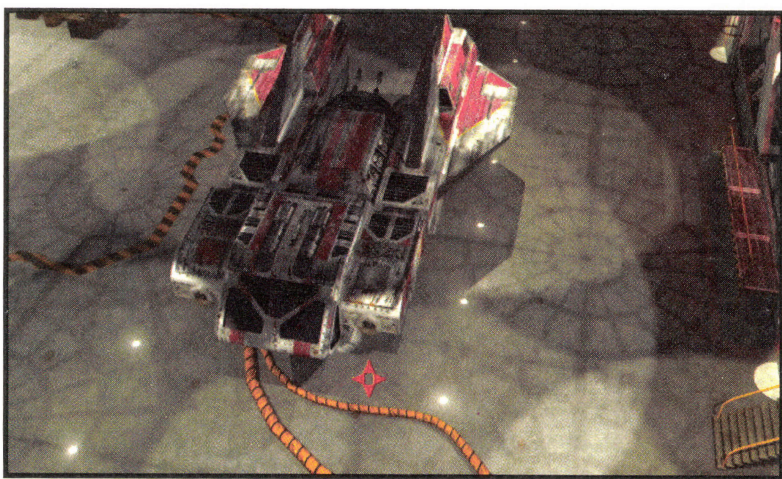
Requirements: 486DX4/75+, 8MB RAM, SVGA, DOS 5.0, 2x CD-ROM

Recommended: Pentium 70, 16MB RAM

Controller: Mouse, Joystick or Keyboard

Players: One

Price: \$59.99



● The BW Avenger torpedo bomber is one of the ships new to the Wing Commander series.

rescue missions. These include planetary missions; try to remember that the ground hurts if you hit it. A little altimeter will pop up on your viewscreen when you fly one of these.

Speaking of the viewscreen, WC3 complainers get their wish: Wing Commander IV completely does away with the cockpit graphic that most WC3 players turned off anyway. Just one more thing to make life a little less complicated and gameplay a little more fun. In place of the cockpit graphic, standard HUD layouts have been used so that you can tell which ship you're currently flying (if you've somehow forgotten). And, just in case you can't tell who the good guys are anymore, cockpit colors let you know which battle group you want to target. Also, wingman selection is now roster-based, rather than "front-row seating," as it was in WC3.

All of the above aside, however, Wing Commander IV isn't without its problems. In typical Origin fashion, you'll need a monster system (a Pentium-90 with a bare minimum of 16MB RAM) to run the game in hi-res mode. A little code optimization goes a long way toward soothing the feelings of those folks who need a major system upgrade just to play a game. And, just in case you're the type of person who doesn't like to read the manuals (y'know, kinda like me), you'll probably wind up with a game crash every couple of missions. To fix this, remove or remark out

EMM386 and/or SmartDrv from your boot files. In addition to the technical complaints, I also believe that the new types of missions are an aspect they could have easily left out. They have a half-finished feel to them, as though the concept is good, but the content is lacking. The only reason I can come up with for their inclusion is that the graphic artists demanded they be put in. They look great, but they're really limited. These are the missions that I flew just to get through, as opposed to the missions I did the hard way in in order to see more action.

The boiled-down lowdown on Wing Commander IV is this: it's terrific. Even if you come from the Clan of Monstrously Stubborn Folks who prefer to load EMM386 come hell or high water, the gameplay element is so wonderful that you'll barely have time to complain before rebooting and restarting. You'll also learn the habit of saving regularly the hard way. The Origin production team has done a superb job developing the game around a storyline that would be fraught with disaster in the hands of lesser developers, and the balance of sweat vs. fun is nearly unmatched in the gaming world to date. **CGR**

- Ted Chapman

CHECK IT OUT AT

<http://www.ea.com/origin/english/product/pc-cd/current-titles/wing-4/index.html>

Counter Point

"Impressive" is an understatement when describing Wing Commander IV. Just about every single aspect of this game sets new industry standards, including graphics, live-action video, sound and superior gameplay. I agree with Ted that this is clearly one of the finest space-combat simulation games to be produced for the PC to date. My only discrepancy with him concerns the planet based missions which he thought were unnecessary. I found to add some variety to the typical "space" environment. I can remember when I first saw the original Wing Commander back in 1990. It was pretty cool for its day and age, but the technology just wasn't available to make it completely realistic. Although I never did play Wing Commander II and III in the following years to come, comparing the first and last Wing Commander games is not unlike comparing a 1967 Chevy Nova with a 1996 ZR-1 Corvette. The differences are that profound. Origin's attention to detail merits some kind of award with its eye-popping graphics and incredible sound effects. Even though that "once-young" Luke Skywalker is looking older than ever, he can still save the universe with a Hollywood-caliber performance. I was also pleased to see that Origin did away with the cockpit interior since everyone seemed to turn it off anyway. The only catch to this "next generation" computer game is that its going to require the "next generation" of computer hardware. But since everyone and their sister seems to be upgrading to a Pentium and boosting their RAM power these days, it might not be such a concern. In fact, you might even justify upgrading your equipment just so you can play this game (it's that good!). My compliments to Origin for producing this "next to perfect" space-combat simulation game. - FRANK



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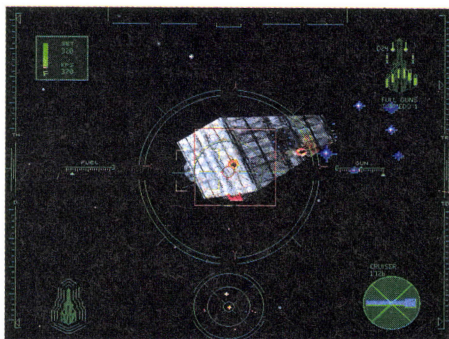


WCIV: Combat Ready

WC4 had only been out a couple of days before I started getting e-mail about it. Here are some tips for surviving the missions that I got the most mail about, as well as some general info about the game itself.

The Longest-Shortest Mission

This mission is one in which you must force a Border Worlds convoy to accept the Confederation's law stating that every convoy must have a Confed escort. It's about as pointless a mission as you can get, and still fall under the auspices of the game's story line. This mission stretches credibility, yet you have to get through it. The convoy is composed of two Cruisers and 10 Banshees. I've been hearing complaints about this one from everyone in the Sendai offices (not just CGR), so I figured this would be a good place to start. Most of the complaints have been along the lines of, "It's too hard trying to take down an



armed escort of 10 Banshees!" Well, yes, it is. Taking the only ship available that has even a chance against that kind of firepower, the Hellcat, is considered something of a suicide maneuver. There are some good pilots in the convoy, and they'll take their sweet time to get you into a favorable (for them, that is) position. You'll be merrily slugging the shields of a Banshee unlucky enough to fall into your field of view, when BOOM! You go up like a roman candle. End of story. I beat this mission in both of the ways it can be done. Doing it the hard way, by taking on the enemy Banshees in a Hellcat, is enough to make you want to throttle the mission designer. However, that's also the sign of a good mission design. Doing it the easy way is much too easy. Here's the firing solution for doing it that way, and just try telling me you're not disappointed. Take the Longbow. Load it with Spiculum IR missiles. As soon as you're in the mission, launch all of the SIRs. They'll merrily go hunting for enemy ships, keeping them busy while you concentrate on your real objective. Target one of the Cruisers. Arm a torpedo, then arm a second one to fire in salvo. Afterburn straight toward the Cruiser you chose and locked in your targeting system. Cruisers are notoriously poor shots, but they have such incredible firepower that you don't want to stay in their firing range for long. As soon as you get to within about 300 meters (in other words, dangerously close), fire your torpedo salvo. Unless the Cruiser gunners are a lot better than you should expect them to be, the convoy will be down one Cruiser. IMMEDIATELY STOP FIRING! The Border Worlders will surrender and accede to your requests. Congratulations! I ran this mission over and over; by aiming for the Cruiser, I finished it in no more than two-and-a-half minutes. Don't get discouraged, though, if it takes you a bit longer.



CHOOSE YOUR SHIP

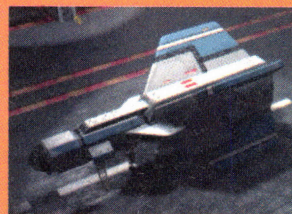
Sometimes the difference between winning a mission and ejecting is the ship you fly. Choose carefully based on your mission objectives.



Hellcat Medium Fighter

Max Velocity: 420 k/s
Max Afterburner Velocity: 1200 k/sec

- The Hellcat is one of the most versatile craft you can pilot. Unfortunately, that versatility almost makes it fairly fragile. Try not to get stuck flying it when there are capital ships around.



Longbow Torpedo Bomber

Max Velocity: 320 k/s
Max Afterburner Velocity: 700 k/sec

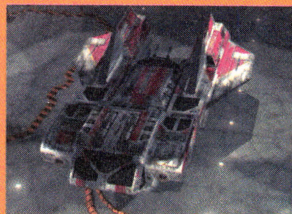
- Despite the Longbow's incredibly slow pace, it can take more abuse than any other ship in the game except for the Dragon. Its poor maneuverability makes it a traveling target, though.



Banshee Light Fighter

Max Velocity: 520 k/s
Max Afterburner Velocity: 1300 k/sec

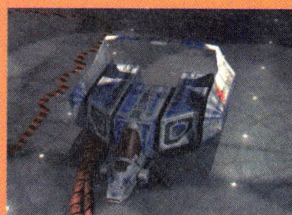
- When you begin your career with the Border Worlds, you'll be given access to the Banshee. It is quick and nimble, although its shields are fairly thin. A good general-purpose fighter, and one you can take on almost any mission.



Avenger Torpedo Bomber

Max Velocity: 350 k/s
Max Afterburner Velocity: 750 k/sec

- The Avenger is a lumbering beast that must be used with care. For pinpoint delivery of heavy weapons, there are few ships that can touch it. Its standard Leech Lasers and Stormfire cannon make it a ship you don't really want to get near.



Vindicator Medium Fighter

Max Velocity: 400 k/s
Max Afterburner Velocity: 950 k/sec

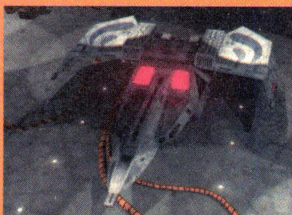
- The Border Worlds' equivalent of the Hellcat, the Vindicator is a fairly average craft. It will never set any speed records, nor will many pilots survive more than a few encounters with the enemy while seated in its cockpit. It does, however, carry a tractor beam, which can play havoc with enemy pilots' aim.



Bearcat Heavy Fighter

Max Velocity: 550 k/s
Max Afterburner Velocity: 1400 k/sec

- Now here's a ship you can really sink your teeth into! Despite its classification as a heavy fighter, this experimental craft has acceleration and velocity rates that are better than the Banshee Light Fighter. A beautiful craft that can rock and roll with the best of them.



Dragon Heavy Fighter

Max Velocity: 500 k/s
Max Afterburner Acceleration: 900 k/sec²

- This is the ballsiest craft in the game. Once you lay your hands on one, you'll never look at another type of fighter. The Dragon is a stunning technological achievement, capable of high speeds even with its huge mass. Its shields are the equal of the Longbow, and it carries nearly as many missile weapons.

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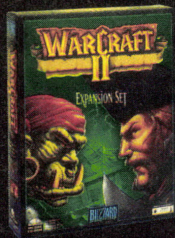
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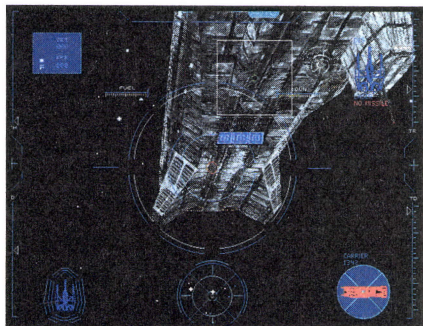
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Disable That Cap!

This is a mission that I've been getting an inordinate amount of mail about, and so I figured that, rather than having to explain it 20 different times to 20 different people, I'd cover it once and hope for the best. The mission occurs fairly late in the game, and it comes paired with one other mission. If you decided to go after stealing the Bearcats in the mission prior to this one (rather than attacking the manufacturing plant), you'll be offered the option of taking the Bearcat. This is the ship of choice. If

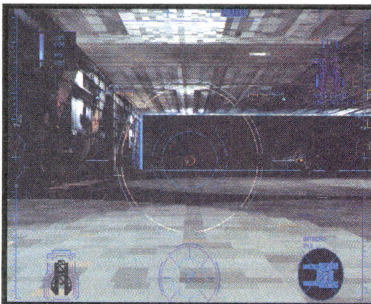


you went after the manufacturing plant, take a Banshee. Make certain you load all the hardpoints with Leech missiles. In one of the cinematics leading up to this mission, Pliers offers you some new technology: a cloak. The downside to this is that you can't take a wingman. I opted for the cloak, and went in wingless. Take out the Carrier's fighter cover first; going after the Carrier before this is done will get you dead. Get enough Leeches into the Carrier to disable its turrets. Now it's a matter of shooting a really big fish in a really small barrel. Take a quick tour to the tail end of the Carrier (it's the end that doesn't have yellow on it, if that helps). Position yourself about three hundred to four hundred meters out and transfer all of your available

power to your weapons systems. Turn on those lovely Leech guns you have strapped to your belly, and open fire on the three engine areas. Remember not to use your main guns; if you accidentally destroy the Carrier, you lose the mission. Once the engines are gone, the Carrier can't move and gets transferred to the "disabled" list. A Border Worlds capital ship will move in once the Carrier is disabled.

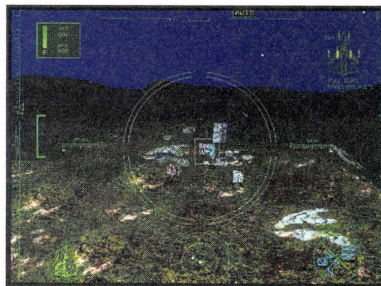
Target Practice

If you chose not to defect the first time, you'll get a second chance. Now is the time to save your game if you want some target practice. If you choose not to defect the second time you are asked, there is no way to win the game. There is also no way to win the mission you'll be in. And so, prepare for a little target practice. Go into the mission, and when Eisen asks you to join the Border Worlds' cause, tell him no. The Intrepid immediately becomes invulnerable and starts launching waves of ace fighters. This continues until either you or the Lexington is destroyed. If you've ever yearned to learn how Maniac flies, this is the place to study him. He'll be all over you like white on rice. Bear in mind that you cannot win if you don't defect, but you can get a good idea of how good you are as a pilot. Like I said, save your game before you start this mission. My best time in the sky on this mission at Ace difficulty level was a little over four minutes. It gets hairy fast, so have fun.



Grounded! Things to remember on Ground Assault

The Ground Assault missions in Wing Commander IV are easily the worst missions, collectively, in the game. They are generally pointless, and the mission designers apparently included them at the behest of the graphic artists. At least, that's what it looks like to me. Space-based combat is what Wing Commander fans pay for and expect; throwing in planetary missions just for the sake of showing off what the artists are capable of is ludicrous. Nevertheless, here are some pointers to help you survive. Under no circumstances should you fly into the ground. There's a little altimeter that pops up on the left side of your HUD when



you enter the planetary environment; use it! Turrets should be your primary targets; they pack a lot of firepower into a small area, and they can wreak havoc on the unsuspecting transport or fighter. Take them down with full guns, synchronized. If you're desperate, lob a missile or two at them. Only when they're safely out of the way should you turn your attention to any pesky enemy ships. This tactic comes with a warning, though: If you're escorting a transport, keep in constant radio contact. If the transport starts taking enemy fire, ignore the turrets and chase off the enemy fighters. If you're running recon, take out all the enemies first, then take your pictures. And don't forget to switch back to your main guns before autopiloting to the next way point!

Leech Penetration: 600 du Lock Time: 60 s Tracking: Yes 	Spiculum IR Penetration: 450 du Lock Time: 40 s Tracking: Yes 	Javelin HS Penetration: 400 du Lock Time: 20 s Tracking: Yes 	Dumbfire Penetration: 600 du Lock Time: 60 s Tracking: No 	Pilum FoF Penetration: 250 du Lock Time: 60 s Tracking: Yes 	Mine Penetration: 500 du Lock Time: 60 s Tracking: Yes 	Flashpack Penetration: 9999 du Lock Time: 60 s Tracking: Yes
<p>Although it has an incredibly long lock time, it is well worth loading a few Leeches on your ship. The Leech overloads the power supply on an enemy ship, reducing the amount of power it has to divide among its systems. Get enough of these into a cap ship and it's bye-bye gun turrets. They can even disable a ship.</p>	<p>The Spiculum IR is a fast-lock, high-explosive bolt that will continue to track a target for up to 60 seconds. With an exit velocity high enough to make Superman wince, there is barely a pilot in existence who is up to the challenge of evading or destroying a Spiculum.</p>	<p>Javelins are a really big waste of your time. Their two-second lock time will seem like an eternity when you're in the heat of battle. They can also kill you accidentally; if you launch one and then hit your afterburners, chances are pretty good that you'll end up with some singed tailfeathers. Load Dumbfires instead.</p>	<p>Though useless against a fighter unless the pilot is big and stupid, the Dumbfire is a terrific aid in taking out capital ships. Gang them together and launch a salvo when you get within about 500 meters of a capital ship; the combined force is enough to take out a small- to medium-size cap. Dumbfires are incredibly fast.</p>	<p>Although Pilums have a fairly low-blast explosive, they come in very handy when you know you'll be entering a zone with a lot of enemy ships. If you gang them all together and fire off a salvo at the first sign of trouble, Pilums will merrily hunt down enemy ships; if one ship cloaks, it will lock on the next uncloaked enemy.</p>	<p>Mines are great for getting someone off your tail. If you're in a big, slow craft, such as the Longbow, these can literally save your ass. Remember where you dropped them, though, since they are indiscriminate killers, exploding whenever something comes within range. That includes both enemies and friends.</p>	<p>The Flashpack is a special weapon that you will only get to use once in the entire game. Developed by the Black Lance, the Flashpack is a limpet mine capable of taking down a super-capital ship (such as the carrier Vesuvius) in one shot. Although it has a long lock time, the damage inflicted is nearly infinite.</p>



Cinematics: Manipulating the Ones You Love Most

When you come to decision points in the cinematic sequences, there are some basic rules you should follow. They break down according to who you're talking to, and they depend on which side you're fighting for.

Catscratch:

Never, ever dress him down. He reveres you, and dressing him down takes away his confidence and his loyalty. Most importantly, show him you're human, and that playing by the rulebook isn't necessarily the right way to do things.



Catscratch

Pliers:

He's your guardian angel. Trust his decisions about your ship, and he'll reward you with fun gadgetry.



Pliers

Panther:

Like her name implies, she likes the role of stealth fighter. She also doesn't like war. Treat her like a dove.



Panther

Hawk:

The opposite of Panther. He loves war. In making decisions between him and Panther, I generally favor Panther. There are two winning endgames, and each is based on whether your style is more dove or hawk.



Hawk

The other players are hardly worth mentioning, as any choices you make concerning them have no bearing on the way the game turns out. Well, almost no bearing. When you are called on to choose between Dekker and Maniac, one or the other will perform below expectations. This is a "lose/lose" situation, and there's nothing you can do about it. Also, when you must choose between Dekker and Sosa, take your pick. Neither one will be affronted by your decisions.



Dekker

Just For Fun

- Try playing any of the missions on the Nightmare difficulty level.
- Try blowing up the Intrepid from the inside.
- Try threading the needle by repeatedly flying through any enemy capital ship with a landing bay. This is particularly fun during the first battle with the Vesuvius.
- In like vein, try fleeing to the interior of the Vesuvius as it makes its Jump.

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Prodigal Descendant

Interplay has done it to you again. After spending an inordinate amount of time, sweat and energy seeking out the reactors and dodging the laser shots of those pesky, yet colorful robots in the original *Descent*; players were rewarded for their efforts with an additional, more challenging set of missions in the add-on-pack, *Descent: Levels of the World*. Now that you've conquered those 100 levels of *Descent*, here's your next treat...

Descent II features 30 more levels and a ream of new enemies that will rock your asteroid. If you aren't familiar with the previous *Descent*, you will undoubtedly be in awe at the complex array of tunnels and different secret areas that the *Descent* series of games requires you to navigate your craft through.

In summary, *Descent II* is an excellent improvement over its predecessors. The digital sequences between levels are very well done, and the texture-mapped 3-D game graphics are likewise impressive. Interplay has also done some nice work on making the three axes of movement (left/right, front/back, up/down) smoother and more seamless than before. The dizzying motion of twisting and turning upside-down while turning and descending is now even more disorienting.

Sob Story

For those not familiar with *Descent*, your mission is, as it always has been, to pene-

The Company has screwed you back into the cockpit; it's time to descend again



● There are lots of little toys available for the questing space jockey, like the Afterburner unit above.

trate deep into the Post Terran Mining Company (PTMC) asteroid mines and shut down the reactor that runs all of the systems in the complex. The company that you work for has renewed your contract under an emergency clause that basically screws

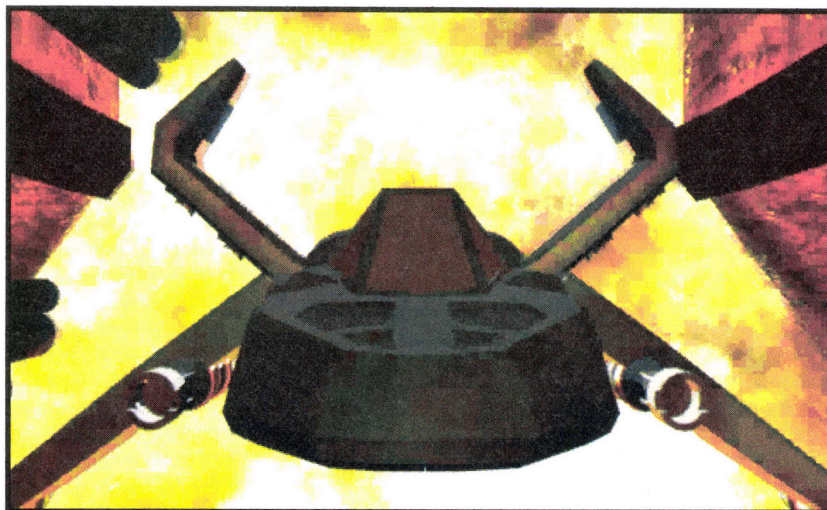
you to the wall. Your mission is reconnaissance—or so they tell you. One problem: There are automated robots all through the mines that they are still faithfully defending. They are programmed to take out any intruders. Because of the alien presence, all of the robots have been fitted with "defensive" weapons. Your challenge is to defeat the robotic guardians and rescue the hapless human mine workers that have been imprisoned inside the complex. Nice work, if you can live through it.

Man's Best Friend—The Guide-bot

This time the folks at Interplay have been kind enough to provide you with a handy companion called the Guide-bot. (Do you get the feeling that a lot of people complained about finding their way around the mines in *Descent*?) At the beginning of each level, the Guide-bot is trapped in a small cell somewhere in the mining complex. When released, it will actively seek out a task for you and then come back to get you after it has found what you're looking for. You can task it to look for power-ups, keys, the reactor or the exit, or if you prefer you can tell it to leave you alone (my favorite). Unfortunately, the Guide-bot is not an offensive tool—it only has weak lasers that are usually used for opening doors. This 'bot's a Timex™ design—he can take a lickin' and keep on ticking—but there will come a point when he's just had enough, and he'll die.

Along with its keen tracking ability, the Guide-bot comes equipped with a camera that allows you to see through the Guide-bot's eyes, which is great for scouting ahead. But along with its other limitations, this automated scout cannot get to areas blocked by certain barriers such as a force field or a secret door.

As you might guess, this Guide-bot is very useful when you get lost and really need some help finding your way through the labyrinth. But there's another tactic that increases the bot's value. The cannibalistic enemy bots often prefer the destruction of the Guide-bot over your own, so sending it in first will gather a large cluster setting them up like fish in a barrel. Easy shootin'! Of course, the Guide-bot is not without its charms, either—you can name it what you like and keep it around as your pet. Cute.



● After you defeat the reactor and find the exit, just sit back and let them do the flying.



● This Diamond Claw is about to shatter your ego with his oh-so-sharp talons; what an expensive death!

Dealers of Destruction

Among the myriad enemies you will face within the mines are the usual baddies from the previous games and 30 new ones. They are a truly nasty cast that play all sorts of roles. From the Bandit that steals from your weapons load (and is generally a big pain in your rear thruster), to the huge bots that can blow you away with a few shots from their six lasers—or, as in some cases, a single missile shot—Descent II has been packed with more flavor than ever before.

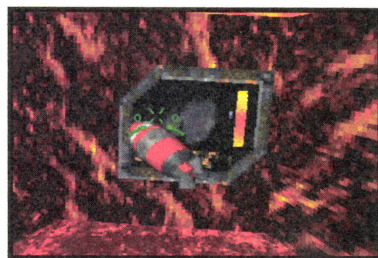
Experienced Descent junkies will certainly

get their money's worth in more ways than one. The robot AI has been upgraded so that even on the Trainee level of difficulty the enemies are fast, smart and full of surprises. Some of them, like the Lou Guard, will not simply retreat around a corner and wait for you to merrily fly by. They will instead cruise around through the tunnels and find their way behind you to strike when you least expect it.

But don't despair, they're not all that well-endowed. In fact, some of them are downright stupid. A perfect example of a bot with a single-program, pocket-calculator brain is the Diamond Claw. The Diamond Claw, as the name implies, extends huge claws made of tough diamonds. This palooka won't hunt you down or do anything sinister; he'll just charge at you trying to drive you into the nearest wall while jamming his claws into your armor until you explode. If he can't crush you, he'll whip out his Plasma Cannon and litter the tunnels with hot gas. As you advance into the game further and further, you'll need to be very wary of these guys—they're everywhere in later levels. In some, they will come out in groups of five and six at a time. Keep your distance from them and blast away with long-range laser shots.

There are some enemy bots that are both intelligent and sinister...and more. The

"Descent II has an impressive array of improvements over its predecessors..."



● An old friend from the previous Descent games is the Mega Missile, this one however has been altered to perform almost twice the fireworks for your enjoyment.

Bandit is the most inimical of the bunch. It will taunt you and follow you, stealing your stuff as you navigate through the mines. If you turn to chase, cruising at normal acceleration is too slow to catch up to the little klepto; you have to use your newly equipped Afterburners to stay with him. If that's not enough, Bandits have strong shields that make their destruction even more difficult.

A nice little bonus for chasing the Bandit is if you can tailgate him close enough, you get into restricted areas that he has access

Descent II Cheat Sheet

If you're having trouble with the cast of characters that Interplay has thrown onto your PC stage, try some of the following cheats to get a taste of Godliness: Remember, in the universe there is one law of nature that must be obeyed: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The frequency with which players employ cheat codes is inversely proportional to their enjoyment of the game. Have a good time.

godzilla

Turns on 'Monster Mode,' all your weppos. do a lot of damage and the enemies blow up if you bump into them.

rockgirl

Gives you a completed automap.

alifalafel

All the toys you need, power-ups, headlights, afterburners and a full stomach too!

helpvishnu

Resurrects the Guide-bot if he has been killed, or just makes another. Thank you sir, may I have another?

to without opening them up. The best strategy to take out a Bandit is to corner him so that he can't run and unload on him with your biggest mass driver and missiles. The reward for defeating one is the gracious return of all your stolen goods in a gigantic shower of floating toys. Robo-Santa.

Big Guns for Big Kids

What would a sequel to an action game such as this be without a thoughtful array of new guns and weaponry? Descent II provides a fair share of them, including a Gauss Cannon that fires huge chunks of explosive metal (kids love mass drivers), and Mercury Missiles that streak toward their target faster than the eye (both human and electronic) can see and covers its hapless victim with a napalm-like substance. All new weapons offer a depth of powerful destruction that is truly amazing.

Of course, we all have our own personal, repressed preferences. My favorite tool for amassing scrap tonnage is the Earthshaker. The Earthshaker is a truly neat toy to have in your inventory and the exact type of weapon that I've been waiting for. If you've ever wanted a weapon that just gets rid of that mess of metal at the other end of the tunnel, this is it. It's simple to use, just point and shoot (no darkroom necessary) and the enemies are history. You see, it's much like the BFG-9000 in Doom in the form of a missile—it'll kill almost anything. Just don't be around when it goes off, or you'll be sorry!

Anxiety Levels

Descent II packs 30 levels, 24 regular, and several secret ones. Their designs are much more complex than in the previous Descent games as they feature several new twists to the traditional Descent architec-

Counter Point

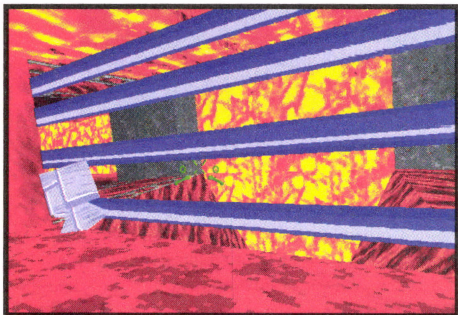
Parallax Software is

apparently not content to rehash a successful game. The original Descent was (and still is) on my top 10 list of all-time favorites. Descent II joins that list. Although the graphics are pretty and the new sounds and music are good, it is the update to the AI engine that I'm most pleased with. Enemies that cannot stand up to a frontal assault will now seek-out ways to pop up behind you, then disappear around a corner when you turn on them; the Bandit is particularly adept at this maneuver. The nearly complete redesign of the enemy robots is astounding, and the enemies now provide more challenge. The levels are more intelligently designed than the original's, with more randomness to simulate a realistic mining operation. Yes, you still have to go in search of keys in order to get to the core of the operation, so those people who were displeased with that aspect of the original will remain displeased. However, wouldn't you expect different areas of a real mining operation to have access keys? Honestly, would you want Joe Blow the miner to have access to the most critical areas of a nuclear-powered operation? I don't think so. Another nice feature is the cockpit-less graphics option, although at any resolution higher than the lowest (320x240) the framerate drops drastically. This is not true of the cockpit version, though; it runs fine at 640x480. The only addition to the game that I think is a complete waste of time is the Guide-Bot, as it is terminally annoying. Fortunately, you've got two choices with it. You can choose to leave it in its tiny little prison, meaning that it won't get in your way. Or, if you decide to release it, you can tell it to leave you alone. It can be helpful, though, as you can also ask it to find specific types of power-ups for you. In sum, Descent II should be on your "to buy" list. Perhaps it should be at the top. -TED

ture. The D2 levels are trickier, longer and generally more ingenious than before. Almost everything in the mines is now interactive, and most elements are either entirely new creations or tear-offs from the original Descent that have been modified or upgraded.

The first new addition that springs to mind are the Force Fields. Force Fields restrict access to other areas in the mines, and, when you bump into them with your craft, they knock you around like a toy made of Flubber. You'll find out the hard way how you will take serious damage if you get caught in a corridor between two Force Fields. By serious, I mean 50 shield points in under three seconds. Most players will probably find they make D2 more interesting and, for the above stated reasons, more challenging. To deactivate the Force Fields, you need to find hidden switches somewhere in the mine.

Many portals in the mines are similarly constructed, since you need to flip a certain switch or series of switches in order to get the walls or doors to open. Remember those neat monitors that you could shatter



● Force Fields are among the many new additions to the Descent universe. Knock into one of them, and you'll know it.

with your lasers in the old Descent? Well, now they actually do something—they open up passages. Other barriers include doors that open (then close) once and only once giving D2 an added dimension of playability. No longer can you recklessly scatter your laser fire; you'll have to think your way around as well.

Navigating through dozens of twisting, turning tunnels can get you lost quickly, even with the Automap. But with some new options added to your craft, you should have an easier time getting around. There is a front-mounted headlight that will help you see through the darkness, but use it sparingly. Running around all lit up makes you much easier to spot.

Drawing Board

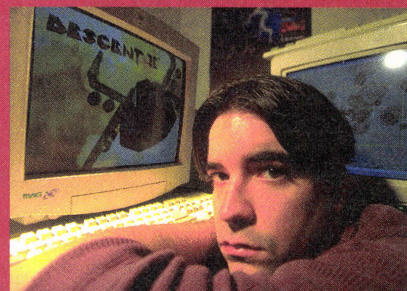
Adam Pletcher is the lead artist for the high-flying—or should we say the low-lying—Parallax Software group who are now gushing from the success of Descent and from the recently released Descent II. A noticeable change in D2 is the artwork since there is a lot more 3-D rendering than in the original game. "We had two 3-D artists working on [Descent II], one of which was me," he says, "...[it] was kind of cool to do 3-D stuff since it was something I had been wanting to do for a while." Pletcher does admit that while a majority of the artwork was already completed from Descent, multiple color palettes made the job more difficult this time. "What it [multiple palettes] essentially does is it helps the way the game deals with shadows, helps it give more colors for shadowing and darkening the hallways and the bands around the lights are a lot less obvious and smoother now." Another benefit of having multiple palettes is that it gives a more distinctive look to the Descent II worlds, so now the water world looks as unique as the fire world.

Pletcher, who cut his gaming art teeth on Descent, also had a hand in drawing some of the new 30 or so bots for D2. "We wanted to do all new ones. This is supposed to take place in a vastly different setting [or] different location than in the first game [with] different solar systems and what not, and we wanted to give them [gamers] as much of that as we could. Give them new enemies to fight." He and the others at the Champaign, Illinois-based Parallax felt disappointed by some other game sequels they had played. For them, there just wasn't enough that was new to make it interesting and so they wanted to make sure Descent II was at least different to look at.

Drawing bots though is no simple thing. "It's very much a burnout task," says Pletcher. "The creative well gets dry pretty quick. That's one of the reasons Jason [Whitesides] did a lot of them because I was..." he sighs, "...how do I design the next cool robot?" As compared to the rest of the game art, Pletcher believes the bots are the most difficult because they are 3-D. "We design the robot the way we would love to see it in a game and then we try to put it in and sometimes the arms won't sort quite right visually. They'll sort in the wrong order. That's the biggest challenge right there, getting animation to work right with the limbs because it's a pretty complicated system that keeps it all together."

The bots have to be able to perform their animation according to their AI (artificial intelligence). "The animation is not all

that sophisticated in terms of motion and what not. The limbs can only move in certain directions," Pletcher explains, "and at certain times. The AI code has to understand when it can move and from what position it can move to another position." When the AI programming starts jelling with the art, Pletcher does admit that the bot begins to take on its own personality. One example is the "sniper robots." Pletcher



Adam Pletcher

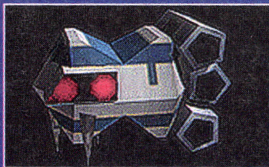
says that these little bots will shoot at you and then hightail around a corner. "We didn't have that kind of level of sophistication in the AI code in Descent I." From behavioral conceptions, Pletcher and Whitesides began to visualize the bots. A perfect example of look and behavior in Pletcher's mind are the "Thief-bots." With "very specialized [behavioral] code," they wanted a to render a bot that was just "bad news." Pletcher's favorite bot, though, is the one he calls the "fish," and those Omega-bots are a challenge.

Besides the "bot work," the Introductory and Ending cinematic scenes were among Adam Pletcher's top priorities. "The end game movie turned out to be a little shorter than the intro, but it's just way more impressive and it took way much longer to do. I just wanted to make sure that the players weren't left hanging...well, left without a big bang, so to speak." He says that he didn't want to do any static screens or "hokey text" for the ending. He instead feels that what they did, "...really delivers."

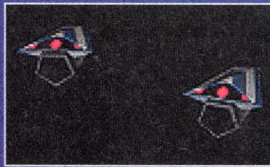
Pletcher joined Parallax in the early days of developing Descent just as he was getting ready to graduate from college. He says that Parallax was one of several companies he queried after seeing their help-wanted ad. He says there is a "big WOW factor" in being the lead artist for Parallax and being involved with two of gaming's biggest hits. "I don't get over it," he says, "I have a hard time believing I get paid for my job sometimes. I'm amazed everyday..."

Pesky Offspring

Some of the more pesky robots in the game won't just lay down and die when you kill 'em. Some, like those shown below, actually break up into smaller robots that will then swarm you. The Sidearm will break apart into the smaller Modules, the TRN Racer blows into Red Hornet fragments, and the Bandit is just an all-around pain in the thrusters.



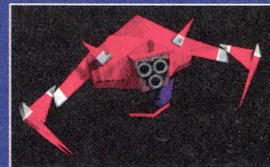
Sidearm
Mercury Missiles.




Modules
More Mercury, smaller package.



Red Hornet
Small Lasers. Killer swarms.



TRN Racer
Mmm, Homing Missiles.



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To help you keep track of where important locations are and where you've been, there are markers that can be dropped and labeled to help you identify places on the map. Since paying careful attention to your Automap is important—or you risk missing passage to certain hidden areas—these markers sure do help.

Some of these hidden areas are secret levels. Entering into one presents players with a new twist. Though you may find huge stashes of weapons

there without a lot of guard bots hanging around, there are plenty of traps. Of the bots that you may find, there are some that don't always obey the laws of physics making the battle even more difficult. You'll have to be prepared for anything! Worst of all, however, is that fact that you can't save your game while in a secret level, but you can exit and enter as often as you like.

Just as a teaser to the folks out there, there are four different planets that the 30 some odd levels are situated on, and the final level involves the destruction of the aliens' mothership. Enjoy!

Network Play

Descent II has some serious network capabilities that deserve a good look-see. There are over five different main types of net games that can be initiated and an almost infinite number of sub-varieties. Some of the main choices include Capture the Flag, where players have to find the flag and then hang on to it long enough to get back to base. If a player gets fragged in the meantime, the flag gets dropped and the real free-for-all begins as players race to get it. Another nice variation is Robo-Anarchy. Robo-Anarchy is just like regular Anarchy, where players simply run around trying to rack up the most kills, but as an added bonus, robots are thrown in and they have their own goals. In Anarchy, there may be only a set number of different weapons available in any certain area, so if your friend has the only Phoenix Cannon and



● Not only are the bots nasty, but the terrain (lava) will wreck your armor. This level four mobile reactor can make you look at life through blind eyes with his oh-so-bright personality.

you need it, you'll have to beat it out of him.

In net games, players can specify which type of game they want to play, what level they want to start the net game on and even give themselves handicaps. This is especially useful for those times when the competition is just a bit too soft for the experienced Descent player. Players can also modify almost everything else in the game, from making the lights indestructible to allowing camera viewing from tunnel markers so that you can keep an eye on any area of the mines to see who's where.

In Conclusion

Descent II has an impressive array of improvements over its predecessors that will be sure to engage players' interest for hours on end. Although many of these improvements may not be immediately apparent from screen shots alone, this sequel sets itself apart from Descent.

With a multiplicity of new features—industrial strength music by Orge of Skinny Puppy, clever robots, super-destructive weapons and 30+ new tunnels—available to enjoy, whether alone or in a network game environment, D2 is definitely an honored member of Interplay's descendants. **CGR**

—Scott Gehrs

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.interplay.com/website/descent2.html>

Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Parallax

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CGR Rating 97

Frank 98

Originality ●
 Playability ●
 Visuals ●
 Audio ●
 Manual ●

"If you liked the original Descent, you'll undoubtedly be impressed with what Descent II has to offer."

Ted 97

Originality ●
 Playability ●
 Visuals ●
 Audio ●
 Manual ●

"Descent II is easily the best game I've seen this year; grad students may want to put off buying it until they finish their theses. Incredible."

Scott 96

Originality ●
 Playability ●
 Visuals ●
 Audio ●
 Manual ●

"Descent II is quite possibly the best sequel this year. The graphics are incredible, the gameplay is more frenetic than ever, and the 'bots great."

Phone: (714) 553-6655 Requirements: 486/50, 8MB RAM, SVGA, DOS 5.0, Win95, 2x CD
 Recommended: Pentium, 16MB RAM
 Controller: Keyboard, Joystick
 Players: Multiple
 Street Price: \$47.99

Counter Point

WOW! I never would have expected this game to be such an improvement over its predecessor. Descent II preserved the same gameplay integrity of the original, beefed up the graphics and added a whole new cast of enemy robots, weapons and other useful gadgets. If anything, gameplay has definitely been intensified to absolute perfection. The AI for each of the different enemy robots has also been improved to the point now where some of them will actually steal your weapons. I found the Guide-bot to be a most welcome addition, especially since it would escort me to the location of the keys, reactor and exit. The main reactors have been downsized from their once massive stature, but they're still just as challenging to destroy. The cockpit now features a missile-view screen so that when you fire a Guided Missile, you can navigate it to its target through the missile's camera view. I also appreciated the Energy-to-Shield Converter that allowed me to transfer my extra energy charge over to my shields, which proved to be a real lifesaver in many occasions. Experienced Descent players will most likely drool over Descent II's immense arsenal of weapons, including new laser and plasma cannons, a new Gauss Cannon, and several new missiles that will set new standards for extreme devastation. The background music has also been "juiced-up"—now sounding more like industrial dance music—it actually works quite well with the game. My only gripe is that the game manual didn't list and describe the dozens of bots in the game for quick reference, and this is a minor gripe at that. Overall, Descent II has maintained what was good about the original and improved everything else to create a game that is worthy of owning. —FRANK

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Descent II

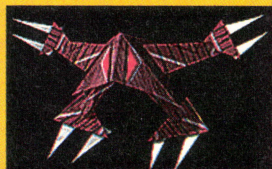
Mechanical Mania



Descent II is one of this year's most highly awaited sequels. The game-play has been overhauled to the point at which those familiar with Descent will be nicely pleased and surprised. Those who are new to the series will be in a quandary on how to actually get through it without being frustrated by the fact that Descent II is an extremely difficult game. There are 30 new enemies that have been put into play and to deal with them effectively there are a few things about each that need to be discussed.

Diamond Claw

The **Diamond Claw** is one of the deadliest enemies that you'll face in D2. It has long talons of diamond that can pierce armor. Steer clear of this bot as it likes to charge its targets, pin them against the wall and run them through. The best tactic is to back up while you're shooting the hell out of it, preferably with something large and powerful. The weapon that Diamond Claws hate most is the Gauss Cannon. Gauss salvos can punch right through its armor more than any other weapon.



The E-Bandit

Energy is a prime consideration in Descent II (one can never seem to get enough of it). The **E-Bandit** uses the static that it collects from the mines offensively in large discharges and defensively as an energy shield. It will also try to drain your energy. Although the E-Bandits can't take a lot of punishment, they are very fast and agile. Keep a good distance away while you blast it with projectile weapons. E-Bandits hate Vulcan Ammo.



The Bandit

Bandits love stealing stuff—weapons, energy, shields and so forth. This robot will sneak up behind you and swipe something when you're not moving. He's fast and can only be caught if you've got your Afterburner package going full thrust. The best way to get rid of the Bandit is to either corner it and just unload on it, or catch it coming at you in a long tunnel and blow the thing away as it approaches. Fortunately, once you have killed the Bandit you won't see it again until the next level.



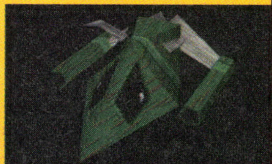
The Smelter

Some of the robots have an amazing ability to cloak themselves and appear slightly invisible—just shadows that seem to shimmer and occasionally blast you with energy lasers. The **Smelter** utilizes chameleon behavior and will cloak itself with the walls, remaining still until you come in range. Its weakness is that it can't change on-the-fly. In other words, when it flies past another wall texture, it can't change quickly enough. Easy target.



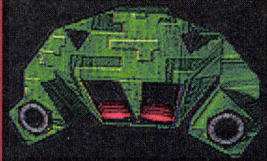
The PEST

One of the first true enemies that you'll run into is the nasty little **PEST**. The PEST is one of those small, slow and generally ineffective bots that was originally designed for rock cutting, so its defensive and offensive skills are fairly lack-luster. It has only small lasers, which it uses quite clumsily. Probably the most effective way to deal with the PEST is to treat it as such. Swat it with any weapon you wish when they swarm you. One or two shots from even single lasers will do it in. (A kind SHOO won't).



The Lou Guard

When you make it to the fourth level you'll have to face up to the really big son-of-a-gun known as the **Lou Guard**. These guys have thick armor and lots of missiles, so approach them with caution. Back off and fire with plasma, or, if you have any large missiles like the Mega don't spare them, use them here. The Lou Guard is especially immune to Vulcan ammo and lasers take long unless you have quads at level five or better.



The Omega

The **Omega** is the most maneuverable bot and can camouflage itself. It is a suicide machine that will run your craft down, slam into you and then blow itself to bits. If you chase it, it will lay mines and retreat around corners. The best way to deal with an Omega is not let it get too close. Its movements are unpredictable, so long-range weapons do best. Homing Missiles pack the punch, however, it is hard to target them with one. Use Guided Missiles or a heavy strafing of lasers.





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~~KK~~
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OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST TURN INTO BLOODTHIRSTY

MUTANT ZOMBIES

<http://www.gtinteractive.com>

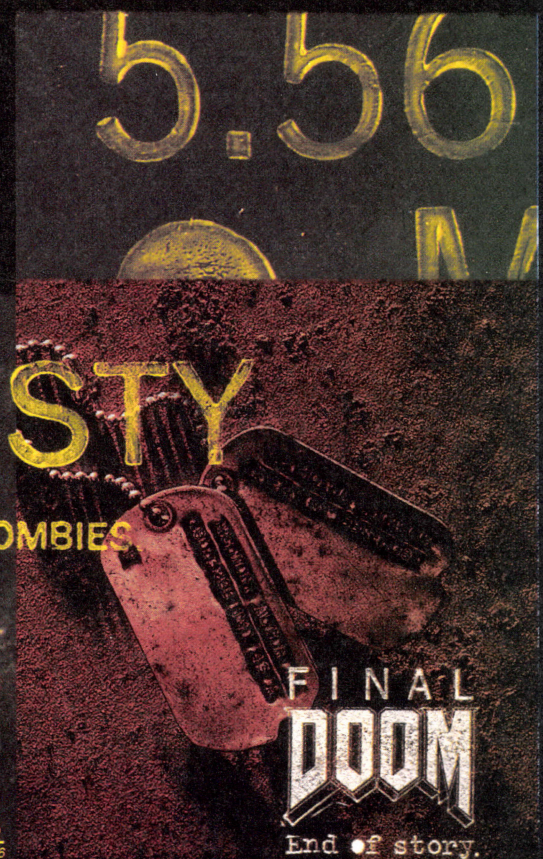


Distributed by

GT Interactive Software

16 EAST 40TH ST., NEW YORK, NY 10016

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FINAL DOOM

End of story.



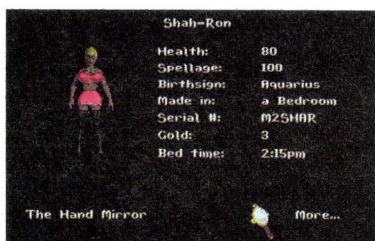
Comedy Kingdom

Politically Correct Adventurers Need Not Apply...And Don't Call Me Shirley!

Sales Curve Interactive (SCI) has blown a long-awaited breath of fresh air into the adventure game market with its zany new release, Kingdom O' Magic.

Just when I was tiring of the stale story lines of typical adventure games, this came as a refreshing surprise. It's funny, creative, interesting and original. From the moment the opening credits start to roll, the player immediately senses this will be no ordinary journey.

In the same vein as *Monty Python, Airplane* and *Naked Gun*, KOM is a humorous and sarcastic look at human behavior and the adventure game genre. When you enter the Kingdom, throw all logic out the window. Nothing makes sense. You step into a bizarre Saturday morning cartoon world, with even more bizarre characters. You encounter mutants, elves dressed as hit men, dwarves dressed as linebackers, gingerbread men, wizards, action heroes, WringWraiths, Nazi wig



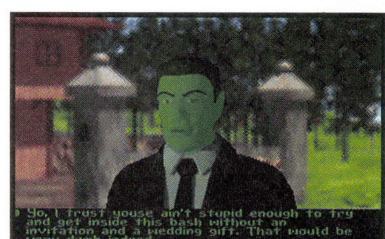
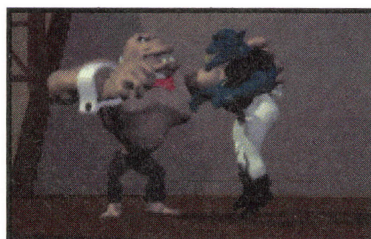
● **Shah-Ron**, KOM's very own heroine (I), beguiles all she encounters with her feminine charm. Be careful not to make these heavy weights angry; they know how to make the life of an adventurer miserable.

salesmen, Elvis statues, Ninja bakers...well, you get the idea, all trapped into what appears to be a '70s time warp.

With every move you experience some kind of flashback. There are flower children, fairy-tale characters, lava lamps, bell bottoms, Godfather impersonators, action figures, mirrored sunglasses, platform shoes, Pac Man games and even suits made of asbestos (wasn't that stuff outlawed?).

It's hard to explain what this game is about. Similar to a *Seinfeld* episode, it is about nothing. There is no story to follow, history to learn or plot that unfolds. The player's mission is simply to finish the game by achieving the determined goal of the quest through a task-based premise. Through this process relationships evolve, information is gathered and encounters can trigger a gamut of reactions that affect your quest favorably or unfavorably.

When you begin the game, you decide on one of two characters. You can take on the role of Sydney, a green lizard-like creature with a Scottish accent and a dry sense of humor, or Shah-Ron (female), a scantily clad,



Counter Point

KOM is high fun, recalling some of the truly great games from Infocom that I played in my youth. The humor throughout the game is decidedly British in nature, along the lines of *Faulty Towers*; some members of the American gaming market may not get all of the jokes, but should be able to enjoy the game nonetheless. The two greatest things this game has going for it are its replayability and its low technical specs. The first is due to the AI that can change the game as you progress through each of the six quests (three for Sydney, three for Shah-Ron). The second is the minor amazement caused by seeing a game in this day and age of Pentiums and Windows 95 that runs well on a 486/66 with 8MB RAM. The interface has been well-planned so that novice and veteran adventurers can get right into the action without reading all those pesky manuals that generally accompany games these days. There are some aspects to this game which I think detract from its appeal, but they're rather minor. For one thing, the script was altered as the game progressed; this is evident from the sound quality. In some places, you can actually hear the change in pitch and acoustics that signal a different recording session being edited in. For another, the game is way too conversation-based, and although the puzzles are good, I'd like to have seen more of them. —TED

blond, action-like heroine with exaggerated feminine features. Sydney, a heartier character, makes his way through the game using more sarcasm, wit (occasionally bouncing in and out

of characters like a Robin Williams bit) and muscle to complete the adventure, while Shah-Ron uses magic, conversation and her feminine attributes to get what she wants.

Electronic Puppet Show



As the evolution of computer games continues its strong march forward, with it comes the improvements of what we hear as well as what we see. In the case of SCI's Kingdom O' Magic, voice-over professionals Lani Minella and John Sessions can captivate game audiences.

Lani does the parts of main character Shar-Ron and Granny. This long-time expert is known for character voices ranging from a wide variety of children's computer games and edutainment titles to work on television and films. Her voice can sometimes be heard on TV commercials for *Married With Children* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Doing the voice for main character Sydney is British actor John Sessions. "I got involved in the project because Jane Cavanagh (SCI's owner) is my next-door neighbor," he says. "...she said, 'will you come and do the voices for the game and I'll pay you 8 million pounds,' and I said, 'I'd think about it,' and she said, '12 million,' so I said, 'Fair enough,' so there we are."



Lani Minella



John Sessions

Sessions, who has extensive acting credits with BBC Television and radio drama as well as feature films, says that it took him a little while to get the voice of Sydney down to what he and producer Fergus McNeill wanted. "I was doing bits, and the boys [at SCI] didn't look too happy. It was going a little bit Glaswegian and there was also the American factor. You can't go and do realistic local Scottish accents from Iowa or Nebraska. So I went for this more Eastern Scottish accent as a template to work off, and that had to be neutral rather than just being a bland mid-Atlantic Disc Jockey kind of voice." In all, Sessions says that he believes doing character voices for computer games is just another discipline in his repertoire of film, radio and television. Sessions says he would like to see scripts and do more computer game character voices in the future.

Check out the audio interview with Minella on NUKIE at <http://www.nuke.com/cgr/chat/chat2.htm>.

Designed in a non-linear format, and because KOM's environment constantly evolves as you play, it is impossible to play the same game twice. There are 105 locations and towns such as Flake Town, Minar Tragedy and Moronica, and 90 characters you have the potential of encountering. Each character has its own set of skills on a statistical screen which reveals vital information, such as health level, spell points, gold and possessions, to help you determine its value to you and your potential to defeat it.

Many of the characters in the kingdom have artificial intelligence, allowing them to move freely and randomly throughout the game environment. They will cast spells and fight one another without your assistance. It is not uncommon to hear the sound of fighting off screen at a nearby location. When the battle is over, you can benefit from useful objects left behind by the dead. Other characters will hamper your quest by following you throughout the game, taunting and engaging in battles with you. In KOM, first impressions count! All beings you deal with will remember how you treated them previously and will act accordingly.

As you begin your journey, you soon notice KOM runs in cycles of day and night and thus regulates the availability of certain characters and locations. Shops are only open during day hours and the Disco is only open at night. Items, spells such as "Spell O' Kick in the Shins" and weapons like "Sword O' Much Greatness" are abundant. Some are openly available and others have to be obtained through a battle or trade. The more items you acquire, the better your chances are for a successful quest. Plus, it just makes you feel better to collect a lot of stuff.

Through this journey you will perform many strange and unusual tasks in order to complete your quest. You may find yourself unclogging toilets, entering disco dance contests and creating your very own gingerbread men. There is no rhyme or reason behind all this nonsense, just a lot of laughs and fun. The scriptwriting trio wanted it that way and it shows. With two English writers and one American, this is a creative team that works. You want to keep playing this game just to hear all the dialogue.

KOM is a user-friendly experience. There are no long FMV sequences to interrupt your game, providing constant involvement and player interaction. The game isn't clogged with information, focusing on entertainment that makes you laugh. The player interface is also easy to handle. The "Ring O' Action" contains all the interactive possibilities, allowing you to choose how you want to interact with the hot-spot item. The Ring has six segments, each one representing an action: pick up, fight, talk to, look at, use and cast a spell at.

I only found two disappointments with this game: On occasion it was difficult to understand some of Sydney's quips due to his Scottish accent. I was glad I had the text prompt on, scrolling at the bottom of the screen so I never missed a laugh. And the other—I had to stop playing in order to get some work done.

I can't wait for KOM part *deaux*. KOM is a kingdom O' fun and after all isn't that what PC gaming is all about? **CGR**

- Leslie Beyer

VISIT KOM'S WEBSITE
<http://www.sci.co.uk>

Publisher: SCI

Developer: SCI



Since starting in 1988, SCI (Sales Curve Interactive) has quickly established itself as a significant and rapidly expanding provider of entertainment software. Its business is that of developer and publisher of computer software, video games and multimedia products. Over the past seven years SCI has successfully established a sales, marketing and distribution network for its floppy disk, Sega and CD-ROM products throughout the world. Its U.S. subsidiary was opened in August 1993 to co-ordinate SCI's local sales, marketing and distribution activities. This subsidiary will be expanded in the future to include an in-house development resource.



CGR Rating 92

Leslie 96

Originality ●
Playability ●
Visuals ●
Audio ●
Manual ●

"Kingdom O' Magic is sure to be one of the best adventure games of '96 and beyond. Expect this one to be cloned."

Ted 90

Originality ●
Playability ●
Visuals ●
Audio ●
Manual ●

"Kingdom O' Magic is high fun, recalling some of the truly great games from Infocom that I played in my youth."

Scott 90

Originality ●
Playability ●
Visuals ●
Audio ●
Manual ●

"If you're looking for a twist of lime in your dry adventure game and tonic, Kingdom O' Magic is an absolute must-have."

Phone: (310)577-1518 FAX (310)577-1517
Requirements: 486/33+, 8MB RAM, 256 color VGA, Windows 3.1+, 2x CD-ROM
Recommended: Same as above
Controller: Mouse Players: 1
Price: \$49.99

ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR

— COMPUTER GAME REVIEW, 1996

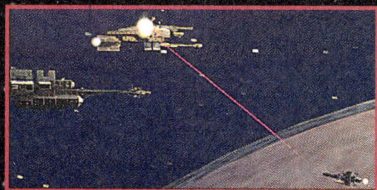
**"LEGEND HAS PULLED OFF A
STUNNING ACHIEVEMENT THAT
WILL SET THE STANDARD IN
ADVENTURE GAMING FOR
YEARS TO COME."**

— COMPUTER GAME REVIEW, 1996



STARRING MICHAEL DORN

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GAME OF THE YEAR

— JERRY POURNELLE, BYTE MAGAZINE, 1996

**"OUTSTANDING AND SUSPENSEFUL!...
BEAUTIFUL VISUALS AND
THOUGHT-PROVOKING PLOT."**

— PC GAMER, 1996

**"A MUST-HAVE FOR
STAR TREK FANS!"**

— STRATEGY PLUS, 1996

"ENGROSSING."

— USA TODAY, 1996

**"IF YOU MISS THIS GAME,
YOU WILL MISS ONE OF THE BEST
ADVENTURES OF THIS DECADE."**

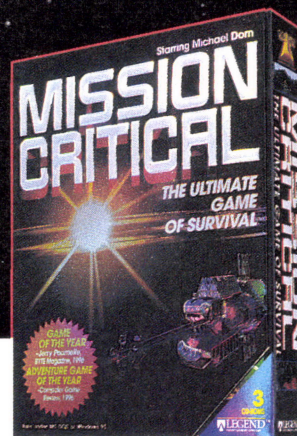
— COMPUTER GAME REVIEW, 1996

CRITICAL

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Strategy Guide Available from Prima Books.
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Spycraft: The Great Game

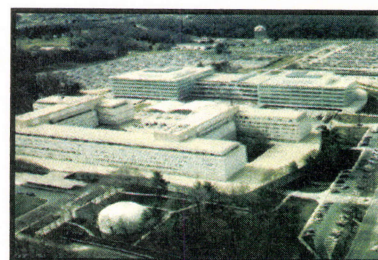
Developed in cooperation between ex-CIA director, William Colby and former Major General of the KGB, Oleg Kalugin, Spycraft: The Great Game contains many exciting elements which combine to form the first-ever digitized FMV spy adventure.

The premise is as complex and interesting as the current political situation in the world today. You are a special agent in the

Among the tools at your disposal to accomplish this are the complete resources of the intelligence community including the DEA, FBI, NSA and ATF. I found all of the tools easy to use, and mostly intuitive. The interface is quite simple to become familiar with. You have access to more and more information as the game progresses, and you will need every piece of available evidence to help you track down the enemy.

At your command are tools such as a Ballistics Identification Database that allows you to identify which type of weapon was used in a crime scene where no slugs have been found. The Kennedy Assassination Tool will aid players in identifying and re-tracing bullet trajectories to enable the player to pinpoint where a shot was fired from. Since everyone in the game is a possible suspect, even CIA employees, a sound analysis tool makes voice and sound identification a breeze. When you run into a possible suspect whose identity you need to verify, you can utilize a complex composite image analysis tool to input the physical facial features of the perpetrator into the computer for a positive I.D. These puzzles—if you will, are

quite intelligent and very well-researched. The different fact-finding missions are quite well done in the aspects of originality, ingenuity and increasing levels of difficulty. Players must travel to several different



● Langley, Virg., is where you keep your office. A good deal of your footwork will be done from the CIA headquarters.

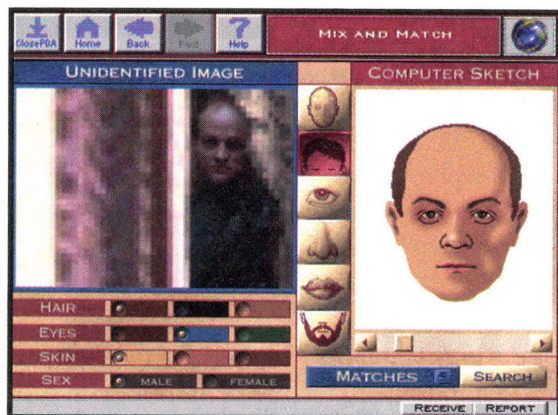
areas of the world to track down clues and try to piece together the assassination plot and stop it. Moscow, Hungary, Langley and parts of the Ukraine are just a few of the sites that need to be explored. This section of the game is extremely well done, the graphics are sharp and the authenticity of the photographs is excellent. The few aerial views of Moscow that could not be obtained

Along the way, just to make things interesting, Thorn's ally agents start to get themselves killed. The longer you take to find the killer, the more people are put in harm's way. The killer is ruthless, a professional, and as you will find out along the way is up to something much more dangerous and sinister than a simple presidential assassination.

The game features a cast of Hollywood actors and an impressive array of digital video along with some picturesque photography of different sites of investigation that players will have to explore.

The missions will challenge the intellect and test the stamina of those who take on the challenge that Spycraft offers.

— Scott Gehrs
CGR



● Among the many toys at your disposal, this neat little computerized facial recognition program will do wonders for your ability to tell the bad guys apart.

service of The Company. A rookie spy, codename: Thorn. Your task is to uncover an assassination plot against the president of the United States. The assassin has already struck once in Russia and he is considered a high priority threat by the intelligence community. The president is visiting Moscow in a few days time and it's your job to uncover the mystery, find the threat and neutralize it before he arrives.

ACTIVISION'S HOME PAGE
<http://www.activision.com>

CGR Rating 92 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Activision Phone: (310) 473-9200 Developer: Activision Requirements: 486/66, 8 MB RAM 2xCD ROM, SVGA, DOS 6.0 or Win 95 Recommended: Same Controller: Mouse or Keyboard Players: One Price: \$49.99

Whiplash

And you thought driving on the Autobahn was dangerous...Get ready to send yourself speeding through neck-breaking loops and turns while competing against the world's best race car drivers and their state-of-the-art racing machines. Whiplash is the latest arcade racing game designed by Gremlin Interactive for the PC, featuring 16 multisurface tracks littered with giant loops, multiple corkscrews, cross-traffic jumps, blind drawbridges and a variety of other obstacles. You can take the wheel of one of eight high-performance prototype race cars, each varying in handling characteristics, acceleration and top speed. Race against the computer or take on another friend over a modem or serial connection. Up to 16 players can compete over an IPX network, making Whiplash the world's only 16-player racing game for the PC.

So how does Whiplash compare with other arcade driving games of this genre?



● If you want to make this loop, you'll have to go at it at top speed. Just keep the pedal to the metal!

Whereas Need for Speed and Screamer follow the relatively conservative arcade driving genre, Whiplash breaks a few rules (specifically those involving the laws of physics) by utilizing loops, jumps and

corkscrews, making it more of a stunt-car arcade racing game than anything else. I found it a bit difficult to control my car at times, especially since you can only control the car while all four wheels are on the pavement, and my car seemed to spend most of its time airborne from the abundance of jumps. The SVGA graphics were extremely detailed, but you'll need a powerful Pentium with at least 16MB of RAM to get decent animation performance. Luckily enough, those with low-horsepower 486's will still be able to play in VGA mode taking a hit in graphic detail, but game play is still just as much fun. And taking its 16 player network capabilities into account, Whiplash offers another dimension of game play for those with network access. **CGR**

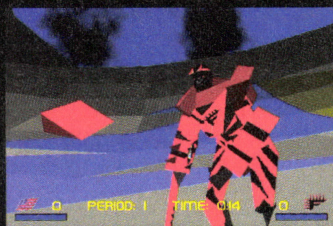
— Frank Snyder

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.interplay.com/website/sales/whiplash.html>

CGR Rating 85 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Interplay Phone: (714) 553-6655 Developer: Gremlin Interactive Requirements: IBM PC or Compatible, 486DX/66MHz or better, DOS 5.0+, 8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM drive, VGA or SVGA Video Card, Sound Card Controller: Joystick or Keyboard Players: 1-16 Price: \$49.99

Your Image
Of A Brutal Sport
Is About To Be
Shattered



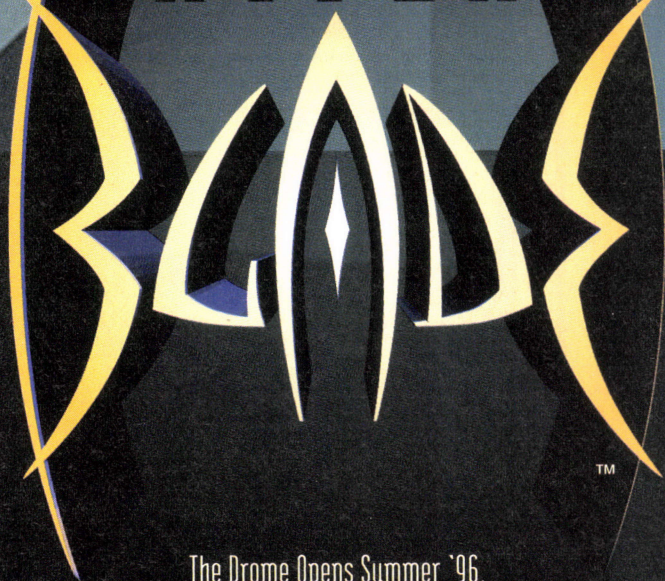
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Developed by WizBang! in collaboration with Activision.



HYPER



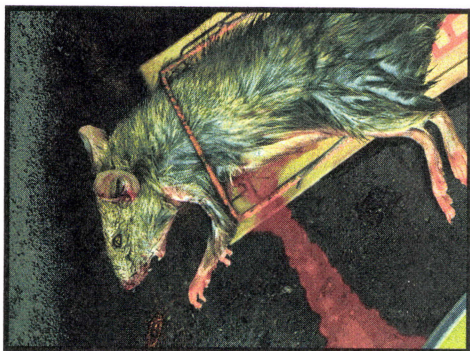
The Drome Opens Summer '96.
Available on MS-DOS®/Windows® 95 CD-ROM.

ACTIVISION®

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Cockroaches. They're one of nature's most despicable creations that have never been successful in winning the hearts of their human counterparts. But what if humans could somehow experience life from a cockroach's perspective? Would they still reach for a can of pesticide the next time they encounter one scurrying across the kitchen floor? Or perhaps they might acquire a newfound appreciation for these disease-spreading insects, look the other way and let the little arthropod go about his business. Probably not. But if they've ever played *Bad Mojo*, they might think twice before squashing.

Pulse Entertainment and Drew Pictures have collaborated to produce *Bad Mojo*, a bizarre adventure game in which you will assume the role of a man who has been mysteriously transformed into a cockroach by a magical locket. Left to unravel the mystery which has brought you to this lowly state, you must explore the dilapidated environment and interact with other varmints that will either help you or eat



● Rats, even when incapacitated, can prove to be hazardous to a cockroach's health.

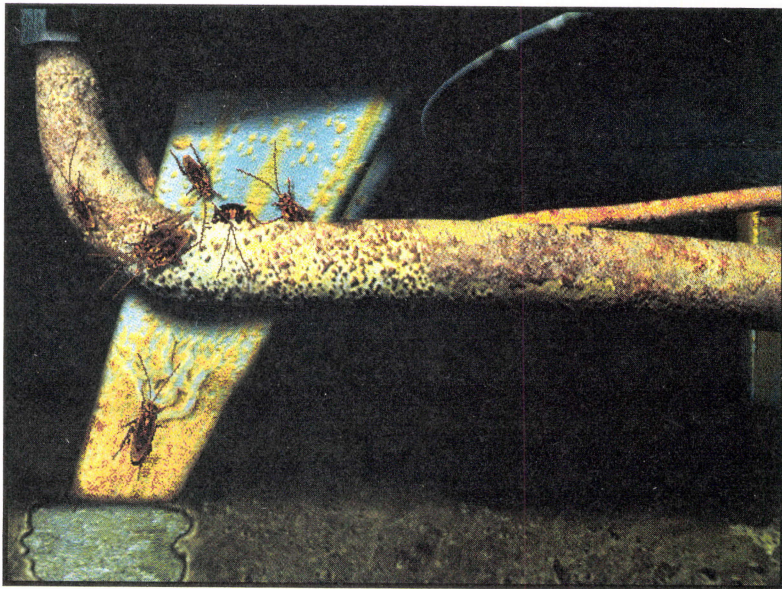


● This spider has his eyes fixed on you for dinner. Why not see if he'd like a cigarette before dining?

you. As a cockroach, your only way of interacting with your surroundings is by physical contact, literally pushing whatever is within your path. Around every corner, a new danger awaits, and you'll have to rely on your puzzle-solving skills in order to survive.

As an adventure game, *Bad Mojo* provides enough brain-teasing puzzles that will have you scratching your head, wondering just how in the hell you're going to

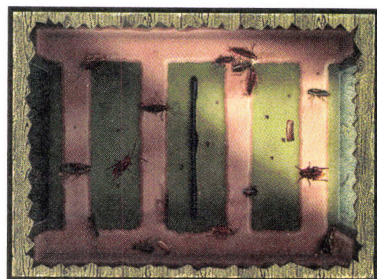
Bad Mojo



● Join your cockroach friends under the stove for some genuine arthropod bonding.



● Roger Samms will never be quite the same after he finds the mysterious magical locket.



● Enjoy your stay at the luxurious Cockroach Corral.

solve them. And since you can't maintain an inventory, you'll need to identify how certain objects relate to each other, memorize their locations, then physically push them into position in order to solve the puzzle at hand. Experienced adventure game players might feel a little awkward at first with this handicapped interface, but it should only take a matter of time before you find yourself thinking like a cockroach. For additional help, you will also be given abstract clues and guidance along the way via psychic connections with other creatures which will help you in your quest.

Bad Mojo's graphics can be a little too realistic at times, thanks to its meticulous attention to detail and disturbing subject matter. In one scene, you'll come across a bloody rat caught in a mouse trap, and it will actually eat you should you get too close to its mouth. I was most impressed by how the cockroach would graphically interact three-dimensionally in a two-dimensional environment, and how his body would realistically conform to whatever object he'd traverse across. The

screen transitions were somewhat disorientating at times, especially when I'd walk off to the bottom of the screen, expecting to arrive at the top of the next screen, but instead I found myself somewhere else. Granted, this phenomenon contributes to the overall challenge of the game, but in my case, I would've appreciated navigational consistency, or even Parallax scrolling for that matter.

On the technical side of things, the screen transitions were a little lengthy on a 486/66 with a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, and if you're an impatient person like myself, you'll become easily annoyed by this. It also took me a while to become acclimated at navigating my cockroach with the keyboard-only control scheme. But in the end, *Bad Mojo* makes up for most of its quirks with an original concept and story line that will keep you engrossed (if not grossed-out) for many hours of entertaining gameplay. A definite must for those who can't stand the mere sight of a cockroach. **CGR**

— Frank Snyder

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.badmojo.com/bmintro1.html>

CGR Rating 84 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Acclaim Phone: 310-264-5577 Developer: Pulse Entertainment Requirements: IBM PC or Compatible, Windows 3.1+ or Windows 95, 486/66MHz or better, 8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM drive, SVGA Video Card, DOS 6.0 or Win 95 Controller: Keyboard or Mouse Players: One Price: \$54.99

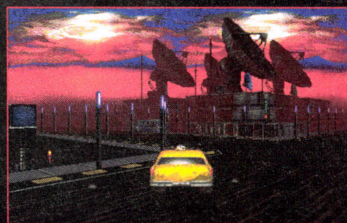
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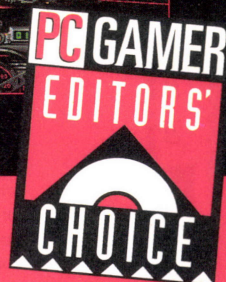
When OMNICORP moved in and turned Hemo City into a prison, life on the streets turned BRUTAL. Then they started pumpin' Hydergine 344 into the water supply. The bacteria present in the water was so bad that it mutated the Hydergine 344 into a deadly virus. The people of Hemo

turned into a bunch of FREAKS! Next thing you know you're hooked up with rebels and end up toastin' the Hydergine Plant and half the city . . . Now you've got the codes to get outta this stinkin' hole . . . and it's only the beginning!



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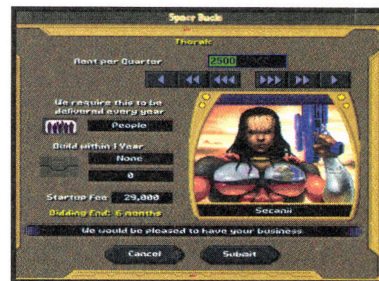
• As soon as you've got a second starport, you can start making money.

gives you all of these things, more or less. Space Bucks is a good example of oversimplifying the wrong things. While its economic model seems solid at first glance, getting down to the meat of it shows that a lot of corners got cut in order to cater to a

Space Bucks

lower common denominator (but, thank God, not the lowest common denominator). Its pricing scheme borders on the absurd; rather than setting price percentages for each item, which would make the game more competitive, you set your price percentage across the entire range of goods that you handle. Huh? I must have been asleep the day they covered that in Econ 101. Nevertheless, Space Bucks is fun to play. Although a winning strategy takes some time and forethought to develop, just keep hacking away and you'll find one. The manual is quite a bit less than helpful in this area, as the developers probably played the game to death before sitting down and actually writing it. Consequently, you get statements that appear to make no sense until you're totally immersed in the game. The tutorial is amazingly useless; I recommend avoiding it, since it will only teach you losing strategies. Instead, the best way to learn what's going on is to simply load up the game and start futzing around with things until you've learned what you're supposed to do.

As far as the technical details of the game are concerned, they're pretty standard fare. The graphics are nice, but nothing to write home to mother about. The same can be said for the sound. An occasional full-motion video clip will pop up to



• Obtaining landing rights means having to appease the locals.

tell you about some new development or other; these get wearisome after a very short period, and the quality is pretty poor, to boot. Since the game is based in real time, it was thoughtful of Impressions to put in the easily accessible and easily remembered [P]-key shortcut to pause the game. As you can build ships, facilities, trade routes, etc., while the game is paused, I recommend you get familiar with the pause function rather quickly; this will save you the terminal frustration and embarrassment of constantly losing to even the "beginner" AI level. And speaking of the AI, there's not a world of difference between the easiest and the hardest, so don't go expecting to get raked over the coals on the hardest level, but don't expect to constantly win on the easiest. **CGR**

- Ted Chapman

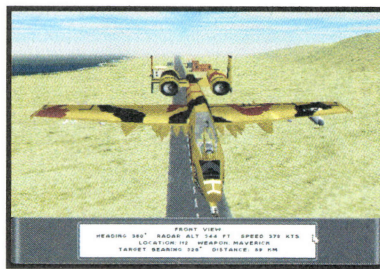
TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.sierra.com/games/spacebucks/>

CGR Rating 87 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Sierra Online Phone: (206) 649-9800 Developer: Impressions Requirements: 486DX-33, 8MB RAM 2xCDD, SVGA, Win 3.1 Controller: Mouse Players: One Price: \$49.99

Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer® II

Sierra On-Line has taken its highly successful A-10 Tank Killer®, supercharged the graphics, added more destructive weapons and three different real-world scenarios, including 24 action-packed missions to create Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer® II, the latest combat-flight simulator designed exclusively for Windows 95. Utilizing the exclusive Dynamix terrain and 3Space™ technology, Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer delivers the intense realism of air-to-ground combat, all in richly detailed SVGA graphics. Hug the ground above tree-top levels at sub-sonic speeds as you close in on your target and make the kill with the awesome firepower of the A-10 Warthog. You can fully customize your weapons payload according to the type of mission and intelligence reports. Choose from 14 deadly weapons including Maverick air-to-ground missiles, anti-personnel and cluster bombs, napalm, rocket pods and sidewinder air-to-air missiles. And don't forget of course, you'll have the awesome firepower of the GAU-8A Avenger cannon at your disposal for some serious tank busting. Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer features a quick-combat mode for instant action and a campaign mode that allows you to progress through continuous missions set in either the Persian Gulf,



• Your A-10 will be camouflaged according to the environmental context of the mission.

Columbia or Korea. Unlimited camera viewpoints allow you to watch your A-10 from afar as it wreaks havoc and destruction amongst the opposition. Like its predecessor, Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer plays more like an arcade, air-combat game than a dedicated flight simulator. By this I mean that the game does most of the flying for you so that you may concentrate more on the combat than having to worry about

keeping your A-10 in the air. The graphics are impressive to say the least, and as a native Windows 95 game, the animation is equally as impressive on a Pentium 90 with 16MB RAM. My major gripe has to do with something that existed even in the original A-10 Tank Killer; having to constantly switch between the cockpit and the Map Screen in order to monitor my targets. Why couldn't Sierra incorporate the Map Screen into the cockpit layout so that this procedure would be eliminated altogether? Sierra could've also done away with the mission map boundaries that prevent you from flying astray into other regions of the world. This is after all, a flight "simulation," as Sierra puts it. These little quirks give the game an "arcade-ish" feel, which is not entirely a bad thing, but experienced flight-sim pilots might balk at its childish appeal. My advice is that if you played the original A-10 Tank Killer and liked it, you'll definitely find this game entertaining. **CGR**

- Frank Snyder

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.sierra.com/games/sttank/>

CGR Rating 87 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Sierra Online Phone: (206) 649-9800 Developer: Sierra Online Requirements: IBM PC or Compatible, 486DX2/66, Windows 95, 8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM, SVGA Recommended: Same Controller: Keyboard or Joystick Players: One Price: \$54.99

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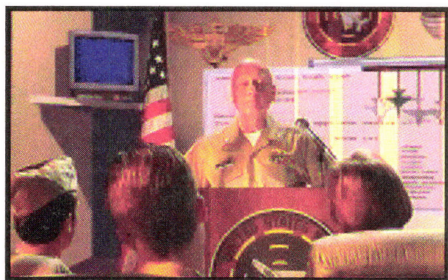
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Top Gun: Fire At Will!

Top Gun from Spectrum HoloByte joins a realistic flight engine together with FMV re-creations of the original film of the same name.

As a flight simulator, the game is realistic and the controls are responsive and fairly straightforward. The missions range from a series of increasingly difficult encounters with the instructors at Top Gun to real-time engagements in the skies over such areas as Libya, Korea and the Persian Gulf. Missions at the Miramar training base are usually dogfighting with multiple bogies comprised of A-4s and F-5s simulating MiGs.



● At Miramar, you'll learn who's the real Top Gun when you have to fly against James Tolkan, callsign: HONDO.

As far as the realism of the simulation goes, most of the elements are in rather close accordance with the real Top Gun training center at Miramar. What's wrong with the simulation however, is a number of things that are inherent in the basic design of the game. First of all, the video clips smack so strongly of the original movie that any flight-sim fan who did not really love the movie will undoubtedly be frustrated at the total over-saturation of the video. While

most of the clips can be passed through with the click of a button, the average hardcore gamer will most likely find the repetition of sequences not only unnerving, but annoying as well. The biggest problem that I had with the game in general is that while you are in the cockpit, you are continually bombarded by radio chatter and unnecessary instructions that cannot be clicked through. Any player, for whom Top Gun is their first flight sim, will probably find the on-the-fly instructions informative, easy to follow and helpful until they get the hang of the controls. However, for the experienced flight-sim enthusiast, the continual barrage of instructions and "humorous" banter will definitely irritate. In a nutshell, Top Gun has some great atmosphere as far as its entertainment value, but for the majority of hardcore gamers, the inability to turn off the chatter will definitely annoy.

One of the nice elements of the game is that upon loading the sim, you can immediately click past all of the intro film footage and dive right into fast action in a number of different scenarios that range from being somewhat of a challenge all the way through to outright insanity. While most of the missions in the Top Gun regiment become gradually more complex and demanding, the majority of the early missions are so simple that expert gamers will



● This picture-in-a-picture view is a frequent and quite necessary tool that adds to the information available for the player in the heat of battle.

find the need to jump into the instant action and may be too impatient to run through the missions that eventually lead to graduation from Top Gun, and then on to an assignment.

Aside from the FMV sequences, the graphics failed to impress this reviewer in any great way. Although the cockpit is detailed and the enemy aircraft explosion graphics were done well, the ground and sea graphics were choppy and at times even chunky. Keep in mind that the game was played on a Pentium 133 with an 8x CD-ROM, so anything that is on the market today is being given the best shot at performing to its fullest.

Overall, Top Gun can be a letdown in the aforementioned aspects. More importantly, for the expected retail price of \$44.99, it is a hard call to tell whether or not it will be worth the money. **CGR**

— Scott Gehrs

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://trek.microprose.com/topgun/>

CGR Rating 84 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Spectrum HoloByte Phone: (510) 522-1164 Developer: Spectrum HoloByte Requirements: 486/66, 8MB RAM, SVGA, DOS 5.0, 2xCD-ROM Controller: Joystick, Mouse or Keyboard Players: 1-2 Price: \$44.99

Havoc

At least the title of this game corresponds with the experience of playing it. Havoc is the latest 3-D action-arcade game from Reality Bytes that is geared specifically for Windows95 utilizing its DirectX™ technology. The basic premise of the game consists of conquering multiple territories while destroying every vehicle and obstacle that gets in your way. Similar to Terminal Velocity in this respect, but with the exception that you're not airborne, you basically just drive around and shoot at different things, blow them up and move on to the next level. A popular concept, yes, but the delivery is most disappointing. There are only three territories to conquer, so environmental diversity is limited to three different landscapes; desert, tundra and wasteland. There are a decent number of enemy vehicles to contend with, but for some reason or other, it really doesn't contribute to the overall enjoyment of gameplay. In fact, Havoc just isn't that enjoyable to play at all. It's almost irritating at times. Navigating my vehicle, whether it was a HyperTank,



● You'll be forced to fight a wide array of deadly vehicles in a variety of environments.

BattleCycle or HoverCraft took immense skill to control, mainly due to the fact that the controls responded poorly and my vehicle would seem to drift rather than drive toward my intended path of travel. The 3-D polygonal graphics, although well detailed, are visually unappealing, and the animation perfor-

mance is less than acceptable. Even on a 486/66 with 32MB of RAM, my vehicle would move in little increments rather than in one smooth motion. To avoid this phenomenon on a lower-end machine, you have to turn down the detail to the point where everything you see looks like solid-colored blocks which makes the game even more visually unappealing. This, combined with its static "fog" which would impede your vision to a range of about 50 meters, makes it hard to fathom why anyone would want to play this game at all. And if all of this doesn't turn you off, listening to the space-age background music will. I actually had to turn it off in order to play this game long enough to review it. I wouldn't expect its network capabilities to save it from consumer rejection either, especially since the whole control interface, and the game itself, leaves something to be desired. Consumer beware! **CGR**

—Frank Snyder

REALITY BYTES HOME PAGE
<http://www.realbytes.com>

CGR Rating 67 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Reality Bytes Phone: (617) 621-2500 Developer: Reality Bytes PC Requirements: IBM PC or Compatible, 486/66, Windows 95, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM, 256-color SVGA Video Card Controller: Keyboard or Joystick Players: 1-16 Price: \$39.99

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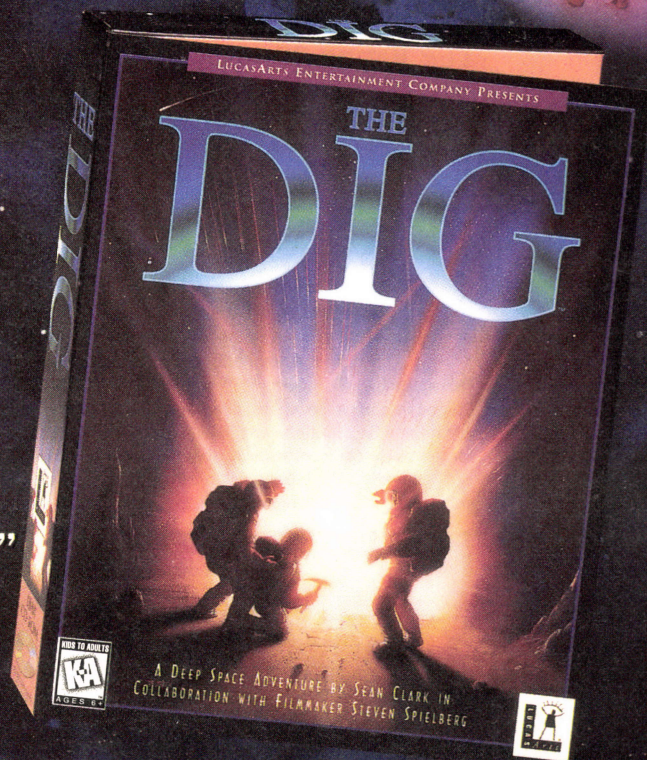
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Fantasy General

A Fantasy General by SSI is a hybrid between Allied General, from which FG takes the majority of its gameplay and interface control scheme, and a wild array of fantasy troops.

It all takes place in the make-believe world of Aer. A mystical setting in which the vast armies of good and evil have been fighting for eons in search of world domination. Then came the Awakening, driving hunger and famine into the shadows and bringing peace and harmony into the lives of many on Aer. The Awakening also brought huge technological advances in weaponry and warfare that, in combination with the already powerful magic of the realm, gave birth to a new threat of terror and bloodshed.

The game features a multitude of different troop types, from Sky Hunters and Aerial Bombardiers to Orc Infantry and Spellcasters. Each new unit has its own unique attack and defense strengths as well as certain movement allotments and terrain restrictions that make each game unique, and every scenario

quite replayable.

The excellent strategy engine that was at the heart of Allied General's tactical genius, has been successfully integrated into Fantasy General, making the combination of fantasy and strategy truly pay off in spades. The single element that did not translate, however, is the AI adjustability. While Allied General's AI can be adjusted to suit the player's desire for greater or lesser challenges, Fantasy General's AI cannot be so adjusted. FG makes up for this deficiency, however, by way of making the troops under the players command subject to the mercenary whims of monetary gain. Troops in Fantasy General do not fight for king and country, rather for penny and pound. If a player does not meet the needs of his troops adequately they will not fight effectively and vice-versa. It is an interesting twist on the traditional element of control that strategy gamers may be accus-



● From the Main Menu, players can choose which type of leader they wish to be—warrior, wizard or simple hero.

CGR Rating 89 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Mindscape Phone: (408) 737-6800 Developer: SSI Requirements: 386/40, DOS 5.0+, 8MB, SVGA, 2X CD-ROM Controller: Mouse Players: One Price: \$54.99

tomed to. I personally found it a refreshing departure from the normal progression of telling the troops to take the hill to the East, then sitting back and watching them pile themselves up in a bloody heap because there have been no modifications to the AI to account for the wonderful instinct of self-preservation.

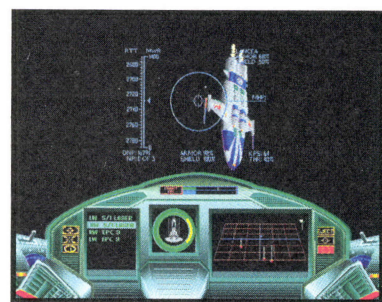
On the broad scope, the graphics are quite well done and the units are nicely varied in their design. The game features many different campaigns and the ability to play via e-mail as well, a feature that will undoubtedly give Fantasy General a lot of replayability. **CGR**

—Scott Gehrs

Renegade: Return to Jacob's Star

R Renegade: Return to Jacob's Star is the second in the series of space-combat simulators from SSI based on the popular board game Renegade Legion: Interceptor™ by FASA. Staged in a universe where incessant warfare is commonplace and the territorial ownership for the planetary systems is at stake, Renegade: Return to Jacob's Star puts you smack-dab in the middle of the action. You

Government (TOG) and immediately thwarts their attack. Left with the responsibility of hunting down the remaining crippled enemy warship Bane Warder, and securing the Jacob's Star system from additional enemy incursions, your character must use any and all means at their disposal to eliminate the opposition. Renegade: Return to Jacob's Star features 60 new missions and two new Renegade ships, SVGA graphics, digitized voices, music and sound effects. There's even modem/serial capabilities which support DSVD (Digital Simultaneous Voice and Data) technology for increased head-to-head combat realism. And like the infamous Wing Commander games, you can also select your own wingmen and ships for each mission. As a space-combat simulator, Renegade: The Return to Jacob's Star holds its own, and the introduction of the head-to-head combat feature via modem/serial connection adds a new dimension to gameplay. The Holo-Space simulator is essentially the same thing as playing the actual combat missions, with the exception that you don't have any mission objectives to worry about other than blowing-up anything that appears on your radar display (ideal for those immediate combat cravings). I was somewhat annoyed with the Command Console interface and that I was forced to wait for a mission to be assigned to me by the Main Computer AI before I could play, which took about five minutes in the beta



● Each ship has its own cockpit layout and unique handling characteristics. You can also view the action through multiple internal and external camera views.



● Whether you're in actual combat or just polishing your dogfighting skills with the Holo-Space simulator, you'll be faced with realistic combat situations that will keep the adrenaline flowing.

will assume the identity of a member in the Renegade Legion who has earned many promotions and medals, but who has yet to prove any leadership skills. Assigned to the backwater supply system known as Jacob's Star, your character stumbles across an invasion force from the Terran Overlord

version (SSI promised to remedy this problem for the final version). Tracking the various enemy vessels with the Spatial Positioning System radar is relatively simple, but I've seen better radar systems in other space-combat simulators (X-Wing and Wing Commander to name a few...). I found the combat engine and enemy AI to be pretty solid, and the graphics and explosion effects were on par with the current standards. Ergo sum, if you can't get enough of space combat or if you're familiar with the Renegade fantasy universe, you'll probably get your money's worth of quality entertainment. **CGR**

—Frank Snyder

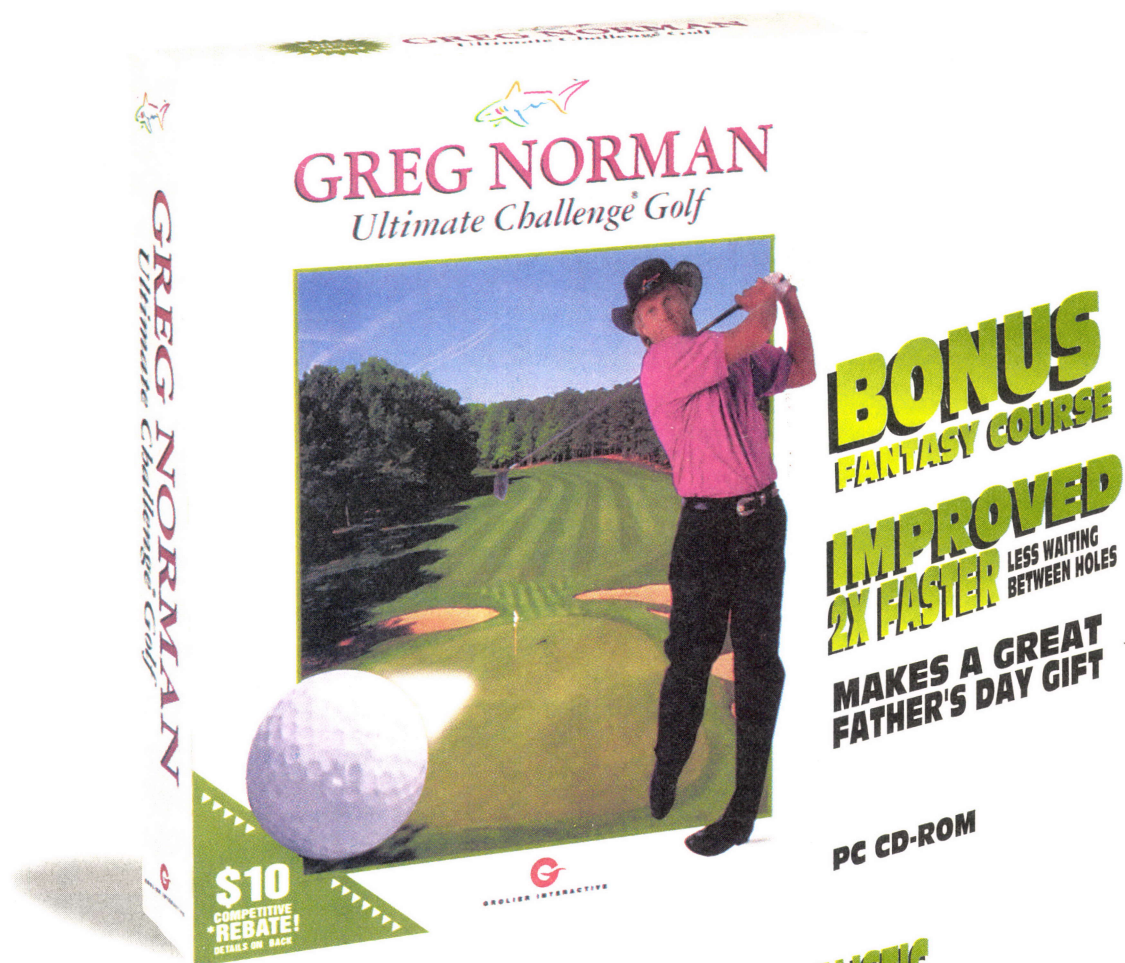
CGR Rating 84 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Mindscape Phone: (408) 737-6800 Developer: SSI Requirements: 486DX/66 or better, DOS 5.0+, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, SVGA Video Card, Sound Card Controller: Joystick Players: 1-2 Price: \$49.99

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—GOLF MAGAZINE, March '96



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NBA Live 96

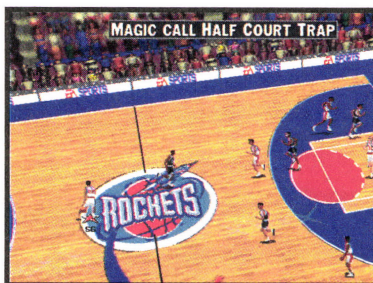
The long-awaited sequel is finally here! (At least I've been waiting for it). After I saw the improvements made in EA Sports' NHL 96, my mouth began to water at the thought of what NBA Live 96 might be like.

When I played that first game of the Bulls versus the Knicks (I as the Bulls, of course), my initial reaction was confusion. I didn't really know if I liked what I saw. The player animations and appearance are very similar to 95, as is the crowd noise, announcer and music.

Still, no problem there. It was really gameplay and AI I was most concerned with. Jackpot! No more sticky rims where the ball used to vibrate on top of them as if they were inches in width; and no more stupid computer opponents that can't figure out what to do against a player standing three feet in front of them. Computer players act MUCH more intelligently now, both for and against you. Another gameplay improvement is the opaque free-throw meter in the shape of a cross with a fanatic crowd waving their arms behind it.

You'll also have to check out the nifty new playbook in the design of a clipboard. Not only are there more plays on it, but the play diagram moves to show how the play sets up.

The balance between difficulty levels has also been somewhat mended. I still find the All-Star level a bit too unrealistic; you can't get a shot to drop no matter how close a player is to the basket and shot blocks come way too easily. I don't know how many times I had dunks and lay-ups swiped clean away from me. For my money, the Starter level is ideal. Although the scores can run high, it is much closer to the real thing.



Like in NHL 96, there are a number of camera angles and styles to choose from. But also like its hockey counterpart, some of the choices are barely choices at all.

Overall, I find NBA Live 96, though prettier, to be more visually confusing on the court than 95. After awhile, you do begin to get used to it, but when things get packed down

● Like in NHL 96, NBA Live 96 has a number of different camera angles to play with or just sit back and watch the action.

low, it's hard to tell what's going on.

There can be no doubt that this is as great a game as last year's version. But I hate to say it since I've already been let down once this year with FPS Football '96. NBA Live 96 is a bit of a disappointment with emphasis on "a bit." Sometimes we can only blame ourselves for building up our expectations, but that's what makes computer gamers so demanding. The improvements over 95 are there, and for now, NBA Live 96 gets to keep the crown for the best in electronic round-ball. But until I see what's in store for '97, I will continue to demand better. **CGR**

—Tasos Kaiafas

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.ea.com/easports.html>

CGR Rating 90 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual NA

Publisher: EA Phone: (800) 245-4525 Developer: EA Sports Requirements: 486DX/66, DOS 5.0+, 8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM drive, SVGA Video Card, Sound Card Controller: Joystick, Mouse, Keyboard Players: 1-4 Price: \$49.99

Fast Attack

When you port a real-life occupation to the computer game market, you have a tendency to gloss things over. Sierra touts the fact that they consulted a former commander of a Los Angeles class 688-I submarine for their new game, Fast Attack. If he saw even a tenth of the action in the game, I'd be surprised. You're a VERY busy sub commander in this game.

Fast Attack is a simulator for the Los Angeles class 688-I (or Improved Los Angeles class) submarine, one of the most advanced naval vessels employed in any of the world's navies. It carries an enlisted crew of 128 and an officer complement of 15, and it is powered by a nuclear reactor driving steam turbine engines. Ordnance includes Mark 48 torpedoes and Harpoon and Tomahawk missiles that are launched via torpedo tube. You are requested by your employer, the US Navy, to carry out a number of missions that range from seek-and-destroy to peacekeeping duty. If you manage to succeed, you get medals. Fail, and you get court-martialed. In addition to running all the training missions, and there are a lot of them, you can also run battle sets for differ-

ent areas of the world, or a full career that will take you from Lieutenant Commander all the way to Admiral. Or you may not be so lucky. You may get hauled before Congress to explain your latest series of misadventures in the Persian Gulf. "Why, exactly," they may ask you, "did you sink a civilian passenger ferry in the Gulf of Aden? What were you thinking?" Be prepared to answer for your actions, because if you pick the wrong firing solution, you can bet that the only bars you'll see will be inside Leavenworth instead of decorating your uniform.

For the most part, this simulation is dead-on. The graphics are good, if somewhat static, for the actual gameplay screens; the cutscenes are beautifully rendered, though. The various aspects of running missions are highly detailed, and sub sim fans will garner a great deal of enjoyment out of Fast Attack. There are some things in here that I would have left out; in-mission music, for example. This is not nearly the problem that was given



● Sending a merchant ship down to Davy Jones' locker is almost too easy.

to the player of Aces of the Deep, where the music was a constant annoyance; it only pops up when you have a weapons launch. I simply turned it off. Running sub operations will appeal to cat-and-mousers, but not to people who are looking for another DOOM clone. I really enjoyed this game, but then again, sub warfare sims tickle my fancy. **CGR**

—Ted Chapman

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
[Web: http://www.sierra.com/games/fastattack](http://www.sierra.com/games/fastattack)

CGR Rating 89 Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Sierra Phone: (206) 649-9800 Developer: Software Sorcery Requirements: IBM PC or Compatible, 486 or better, DOS 5.0+, 8 MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM, SVGA Controller: Joystick Players: One Price: \$49.99

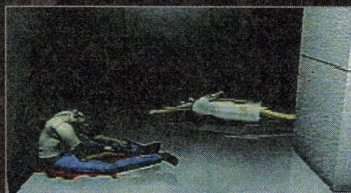
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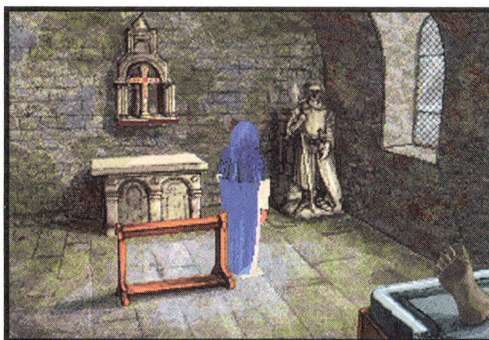
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Knight's Chase

The story line behind I-Motion's latest adventure game, Knight's Chase is nothing new—boy's girlfriend (aptly named Juliette) is kidnapped by evil knights from 14th century France and boy has to travel back to medieval times to rescue her and return her to the present day. Yawn. However, aside from the stale storyline, the game's playability and interaction are excellent. There is never a dull moment. With every move, there is something to be found, used and encountered. With nary a movie sequence, the player is constantly involved and faced with a nice variety of problem solving, mazes and fighting.

Knight's Chase can be adjusted to suit any player's ability, challenging even the most experienced adventurer. There is no scoring system and the game is won by following a strictly defined path of puzzle



● Explore the inner depths of this enchanted castle in search of your lost loved one. But watch out! Danger lurks within every nook and cranny.

solving. The only real problem with this game is the player interface. This is a game that must be saved often and the save game feature only allows eight saved games and they are stored as pictures only. It is up to the player to remember what saved information goes with what picture. It is also a real hassle to keep changing screens to use and find items in the inventory and to use any character commands, such as take, push and fight. It becomes a huge annoyance.

If you liked "Alone in the Dark," this is a game for you. The first in a three-part series called "Time Gate," Knight's Chase will be distributed through Broderbund. **CGR**

— Leslie Byers

CGR Rating 87

Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual NA

Publisher: Broderbund Phone: (415) 382-4400 Developer: I-Motion Requirements: 486/33+, DOS 5.0+, 8MB RAM, 256 color SVGA, 2x CD-ROM Controller: Mouse, Keyboard Players: One Price: \$39.95

Terra Nova: Strike Force Centauri

I can't decide whether I love or hate this game. It's got a great concept and decent execution, but the lack of a keyboard reassignment option is greatly annoying. The default keyboard setup has you using the square of keys bounded by the [Q], [R], [V] and [Z] keys, and you can't change this. I would prefer to use the keypad, but the designers apparently didn't take into account that different people might have different preferences, so now



● Your dropship will come to retrieve you at the end of your mission.

I'm stuck remapping keys before I start the game. Grrr....

Our story thus far: the time is far in the future. Mankind has spread to the stars, and two forms of government have arisen. The Hegemony controls Earth and its nearest neighbors, while the outlying colonies are controlled by Clans, which are in turn controlled by family heads. Needless to say, these families tend to form alliances with each other and break them at will, according to the current planetary politics. Think of it as the Hatfield/McCoy feud on a global scale. You take the role of Nikola ap lo, a clansman who bears a certain cold



● A pirate goes up in smoke under the onslaught of your multipulsers.

hatred for the pirate forces which have recently appeared in greater numbers and with increasing frequency around the Alpha Centauri colony on which you were raised. You are given the task of eliminating enemy forces as Clan intel sees fit. The game is mission based with full-motion video cutscenes; you perform your missions wearing Powered Battle Armor (PBA), and thus are locked into a HUD-type interface.

While the game performs decently enough, the minimum system requirements may lock some gamers out of this

game altogether. The mission screens are a bit on the low-res side, given these requirements. Nevertheless, the game is enjoyable if you can get past its quirky interface design. The missions are laid out well, with some requiring overwhelming force and others requiring stealth. The random scenario generator is something of a godsend, as it allows you to get comfortable with the PBA and the interface while testing out your abilities against various degrees of enemy AI. **CGR**

— Ted Chapman

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.lglass.com/tn/tnova.html>

CGR Rating 88

Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Phone: (800) 874-4607 Developer: Looking Glass Tech. Requirements: Pentium 60, 8MB RAM, 2xCDD, VESA SVGA card, DOS 5+ Controller: Mouse, Keyboard, Joystick Players: One Price: \$49.99

This person is: a. Flying down a waterfall in the Amazon

b. Being shot at by terrorists in hovercrafts c. Crashing into innocent tourists on a gondola

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Shellshock

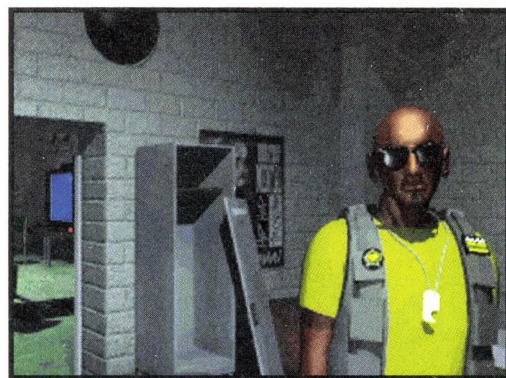
Tired of DOOM clones? Looking for a little variety with a lot of spice? Then check out Shellshock from U.S. Gold, the latest 3-D combat action-arcade game with a serious attitude. Climb on-board your very own, fully armored M-13 Battletank as a rookie serving your first tour of duty for the world's last renegade peace force. Known as "Da Wardenz", you and five other commandos are committed to combating terrorism, fighting oppression and exposing corruption around the world. There are 25 explosive



● The quicker you get your crosshairs on your target, the longer you'll stay alive.

missions in all in which you will travel to such fictionalized, real-world locations across the globe and pummel the opposition. You'll be up against a variety of mobile ground threats including tanks, Light Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFVs), Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), gunboats and attack helicopter gunships, as well as other menacing obstacles such as mines and machine-gun bunkers. As you progress

throughout your tours of duty, you'll be able to collect crates of money to upgrade your M-13 Battletank with a wide assortment of goodies ranging from Surface-to-Air-Missiles and advanced targeting systems, to engine and tank-track upgrades. For added playability, Shellshock supports network play for up to eight players, which should appeal to avid "DeathMatch" junkies. Even though I'm not a big fan of rap music, I found Shellshock's "hip-hop" background music, surprisingly enough, contributive to the overall intensity of the game. Gameplay is challenging and considerably addictive, especially since you'll want to keep upgrading your tank after each mission with the money you've collected. The missions are diversified in environmental context and types of enemy presence, but the mission objectives usually consist of blowing everything up and/or rescuing hostages—not very interesting, but entertaining nonetheless. Although the various enemy vehicles are visually well detailed, the environmental graphics are less of a spectacle. However, this graphical contrast ensures decent animation for lower-end systems, which, in all honesty, is something most gamers will appreciate. You'll want to use a multibutton joystick with a hat switch to



● Your CO won't tolerate any mistakes, so stay on the ball!

control your tank, otherwise you'll be spending some time acclimating yourself to the user-definable keyboard scheme which I found to be a little awkward. Since you'll need to navigate your tank and aim your turret simultaneously, the hat switch serves as the perfect device. I would've appreciated a more easily identifiable mission-ending rendezvous point or at least an easier method of locating the place I had to go to finish the mission. Plus, I was somewhat annoyed by the fact that I would automatically fail the mission if I traveled outside of the mission-boundaries too long (about 10 seconds), a necessary evil, I suppose, but an increased grace-period might be a good idea. Overall, Shellshock is entertaining to play, especially if you thrive on high-action combat with a twist. **CGR**

— Frank Snyder

CGR Rating 86

Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●
 Publisher: U.S. Gold Phone: (415) 693-0297 Developer: CORE Requirements: 486DX/66MHz, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, DOS 5.0+, SVGA Video Card, Sound Card Controller: Mouse, Keyboard & Joystick Players: 1-8 Price: \$54.95

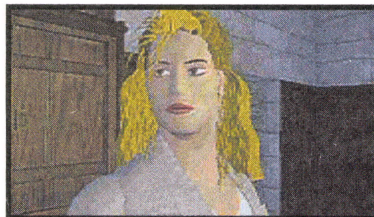
D

In the year 1997, the director of a Los Angeles hospital has inexplicably taken a number of his patients hostage, brutally murdering several of them in the process. Having barricaded himself deep within the hospital, the director, Richter Harris, endures the stand-off with the police who have surrounded the building in full force.



● Just a few of the hapless victims who fell to the evil of Richter Harris.

Unable to move in for fear of additional hostage casualties, the police are forced to wait-out the crisis. Richter's only daughter, Laura Harris, hears of the news and immediately rushes to the scene to



dissuade her father from taking additional lives. Alone and unarmed, she enters the hospital to find a nightmarish arrangement of lifeless bodies soaking in their own blood. A strange and unusually transparent mass approaches her soon after which transports her to another world, looking oddly enough like the interior of a Victorian mansion. From here you will assume the role of Laura to unravel the enigma which has mysteriously transformed her father into a psychotic killer. You'll find yourself

confronted with a number of puzzles which when solved, will lead you closer to uncovering the truth behind her father's demise. There are multiple endings to experience, but you'll only have two hours to solve the mystery and there is no save game option.

D utilizes digitally rendered 3-D graphics in both the first- and second-person perspectives, giving you a variety of different perspectives that maintain an overall sense of omnipresence. The graphics aren't too bad, but the game is basically composed of cinematic sequences instead of an interactive environment. The puzzles aren't incredibly challenging either. The absence of a save game function and the enforced two-hour time limit will either challenge you by forcing you to expedite your actions, or just seriously annoy the hell out of you. However, since the puzzles don't require an IQ higher than 50 to solve, it should only take you about an hour or so to finish the game. Replayability is obviously sacrificed because of this. The interface is limited to fixed movements and interacting with different objects is accomplished by simply pressing the space bar. Pretty exciting, huh? I'd recommend avoiding D for the most part, at least until it finds its way to the bargain bin. **CGR**

— Frank Snyder

CGR Rating 58

Originality ● Playability ● Visuals ● Audio ● Manual ●
 Publisher: Acclaim Phone: (516) 656-2264 Developer: Acclaim Requirements: IBM PC or Compatible, 486DX2/66, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0+, 1MB VESA compatible SVGA Controller: Keyboard Players: One Price: \$52.99

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.acclaimation.com/D/index.htm>

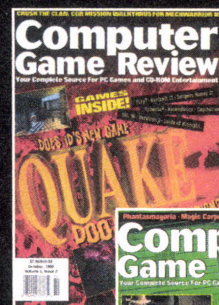
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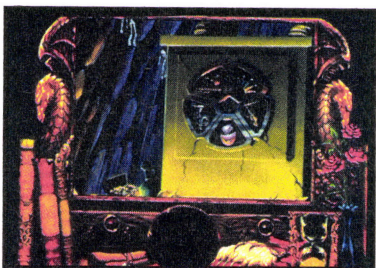
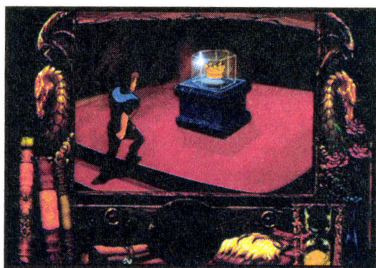


A Fantasy Adventure Series for All Gamers Kingdom II: Shadoan

Few computer games are entertaining for every member of the family. That may be because such a goal is difficult to achieve. It must be challenging and mature enough for the older mom, dad and big brother and sis, but simple and obvious enough for the young ones. It must also have an easy-to-use interface, but have enough support to satisfy the well-weathered adventurer.

Kingdom II: Shadoan, a product in the making for nearly 20 years, is Virtual Image Productions' (with Indigo Moon Productions) latest fantasy/adventure game and one of creator Rick Dyer's proudest achievements.

Shadoan prides itself on being a total family game. Everyone can complete the adventure because there are no obscure hints or clues. As a "plug and play" CD-ROM, it automatically configures itself to your computer platform making it conveniently accessible to both children and adults. Since the game involves difficult decisions that require careful



● Kingdom II: Shadoan features more than 70,000 hand-painted cells.

consideration, it is a nice environment for the family to work as a group, navigating through the adventure together. In addition, the game features a parental guidance option that restricts the amount of violence in fight scenes.

Another selling point is its rare appeal to the female audience. Shadoan's prequel, *The Far Reaches*, boasted 40 percent sales to females and projections for Shadoan are in the 50 percent range. By comparison, 90 percent of general video games sales are to males.

Following in the footsteps of Disney, Shadoan showcases feature-film quality animation and music. With more than 70,000 hand-painted cells of animation, over 300 animators worked around the clock for nine months to perfect the game. No expense was spared in the development of this project. More than \$3 million was invested to ensure a beautifully detailed story unfolds.

The game features 30 completely original

musical tracks sprinkled through the adventure, all arranged by Hollywood composers Martin Erskin, Doug and Brian Besterman and Andy Brick, the same arrangement team that composed the award-winning *Beauty and the Beast* and *Pocahontas*. Shadoan is also the first multimedia title to feature a potential hit song with the game's title track "Where Do We Go From Here?" which will be played on 3,000 radio soft rock/contemporary jazz stations nationwide.

The story follows the adventures of hero Lathan Kandor as he travels through five kingdoms in search of the last remaining relics that piece together and complete his magic amulet. Once done, Lathan will confront the evil wizard, Torlok, in what will become their final battle. There are many obstacles the player faces while directing Lathan through his quest. Trolls and dragons make fierce opponents for Lathan, which impresses the need for magical items

Game Pioneer

Rick Dyer says he's never really told this story about *Dragon's Lair* before, a game he created back in 1982 and one of only two video games that now resides in The Smithsonian Institute. "This came out of the Shadoan project which we will release this June. We didn't have a clue that it [*Dragon's Lair*] was going to be the kind of hit that it was; and here it is, 14 years later and the game is still, up until 9 months ago, in the top 10, on a 14-year-old-game. But what happened was that when we first put it out in an arcade, our writing director went out to the location. We tested at the Malibu Grand Prix in El Monte, Calif., and this first prototype we



• The three books on the bottom left give background information, etc.

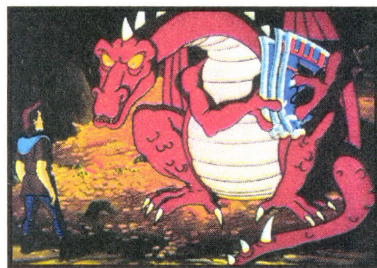
found along the journey.

You will need to make decisions to travel or use items that will determine your fate. Only items that can be used during the situation the player is currently in will appear in the inventory. If the wrong item is chosen, it could cost you one of your three lives. The hour glass at the bottom of the screen also reminds you when time is of the essence.

Along the way the player will also make friends. Helping those in need can be beneficial to Lathan's quest, often awarding him with information or inventory items that will be needed at later times.

One particular innovation to note is that there is virtually no wait time for the CD-ROM to locate scenes in the game. It runs as smoothly as if you were watching it on film, seemingly anticipating the next few possible scenes and caching them on the hard drive.

"Shadoan prides itself on being a total family game...because there are no obscure hints or clues."



There are also interesting books displayed on the playing screen that can be viewed with a click of your mouse. One provides you with a detailed history of the saga you've become a part of and also profiles the characters you will encounter. With this book, players can learn of character experiences that have brought them to their current circumstance, thus creating a personal character/player relationship that is lost in other games. Another book presents stunning graphics that comprise the credits.

Here the designers used a morphing technique

to put the actors' faces with the characters they play. It is one worthy of repeated viewing.

Nearly 20 years in the making, the technology and marketplace can finally support Shadoan. The second in the saga, there will be

three sequels to Shadoan over a six-year span with the schedule continuing for one every two years. The next to hit the shelves will be *Kingdom III: Journey into the Great Abyss* followed by *Kingdom IV: Treasure of the Argent King*. There are also a series of adventure novels in development that will coincide with the story line of the *Kingdom* series. Rick Dyer, President and CEO of Virtual Image Productions, says that the novel and game teams will work separately, but the two will somehow be "weaved" together.

Dyer is a leader in revolutionary video game design. He created the mega hit "*Dragon's Lair*," one of only two games (the other is *Pac Man*) on display at the Smithsonian Institute. He also designed "*Space Ace*," *Dragon's Lair*'s counterpart and "*Time Traveler*"—the first holographic video game. In fact, Dyer owns the trademark for the word hologram.

—Leslie Beyer

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<http://www.interplay.com>



didn't think too much about other than this was our first field test and he calls me up on the phone and says, 'Come over here now.' And I'm going, 'What's a matter Victor? What's going on?' He says, 'Just come over here.' And he'd never done that to me before in terms of not explaining anything and telling me to do something now. So I cleared my calendar and hopped in the car and drove there. When I got to the Malibu Grand Prix there were people standing out the double front doors there and I kind of made my way inside. We had set up *Dragon's Lair* there and it had a top monitor so people could see it from a distance and the game was about 30 people deep. They actually had put ropes up so people could wait in line and when I went up to the machine there were quarters all the way across the console there and I just said, 'Oh, my god.' We had never in our wildest dreams expected that.

Dyer says that the same reaction was going on simultaneously at another Los Angeles site, and soon, even before it shipped, *Dragon's Lair* had garnered nearly \$10 million in orders. "It was," says Dyer, "such a phenomenon. We never dreamed it would get to that level of success." About his current project, Dyer says he began *Shadoan* 17 years ago. While he was working at Hughes' Advanced Displays Laboratory, the young college student played a text based game called *Adventure* and he became hooked on computer gaming. In addition, he had read Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series and the idea to re-create such a fantasy world inspired the *Shadoan* game. Dyer says he doesn't know how the game will be received, although it was apparent to this interviewer that Dyer is very very close to this project. "But I can say," he explains reticently, "regardless of [that], I did as good as I know how to do."

—Steven Greenlee

Hyperblade

You can't help but draw some correlation to the movie *Rollerblade* when you first see Activision's new game called *Hyperblade*, but at least in this case you get to play the game. It is a battle sport set in the 21st century where there are no rules but to win the game. *Hyperbladers* traverse an oval pit-like arena and score by throwing a ball into a goal, called a drome, located on opposing sides of the stadium. The three-man teams wear armor suits (which are customizable) and come armed with a "jak" (throwing device), a "rok" (a projectile) and high-speed blades. The ball-handler and teammate charge the opponent's goal like in hockey and attempt to score. One team member acts as goalie. The other side, of course, will do everything it can to keep you from scoring, including throwing bone-jarring body checks. In addition, the arena is populated with ramps, trenches, bumps, traps and jumps. In short, to get the ball you have to rip it from your opponent's hands and likewise for your opponent from you.

Producer Lewis Peterson, in an exclusive interview with *CGR*, says

Hyperblade is a 3-D real-action sports game, but he believes it's more than that. "It's about setting new standards in action sports games and setting new standards for PC games overall," he says. The game uses new motion-capture techniques developed by Rhythm & Hues, which is the same firm that developed Coca-Cola's polar bear commercials for television. The motion-capture animations allow for fluid and very realistic character movements. Some 36,000 frames of animation are used for the character's full 360-degree movements. Since it uses motion-capture, Activision hired A.J. Jackson,

blading's most famous in-line skater to film his moves. Jackson has mastered such feats as 540-degree spins down 18 flights of stairs, back flips in half-pipes and 30-foot cliff jumps. Many of Jackson's best moves are captured and animated for the players in the game. Eight infrared ray cameras produced a 2-D model of Jackson's movements and then were superimposed on a 3-D rendered model. In all, some 200 moves were captured including kicks, spins, flips, twists, dives, ducks, half-pipe turns and rail-slides.

Hyperblade is set for a late spring release and will support multiplayer network gaming and comes with three different game modes: League Play, Tournament Play or Exhibition. **CGR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<http://www.activision.com>

Developer: Rhythm & Hues Distributor: Activision
Phone: (310) 473-9200 System Requirements:
486/66 Release Date: 2nd Quarter 1996



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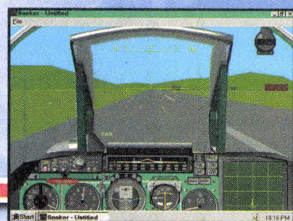
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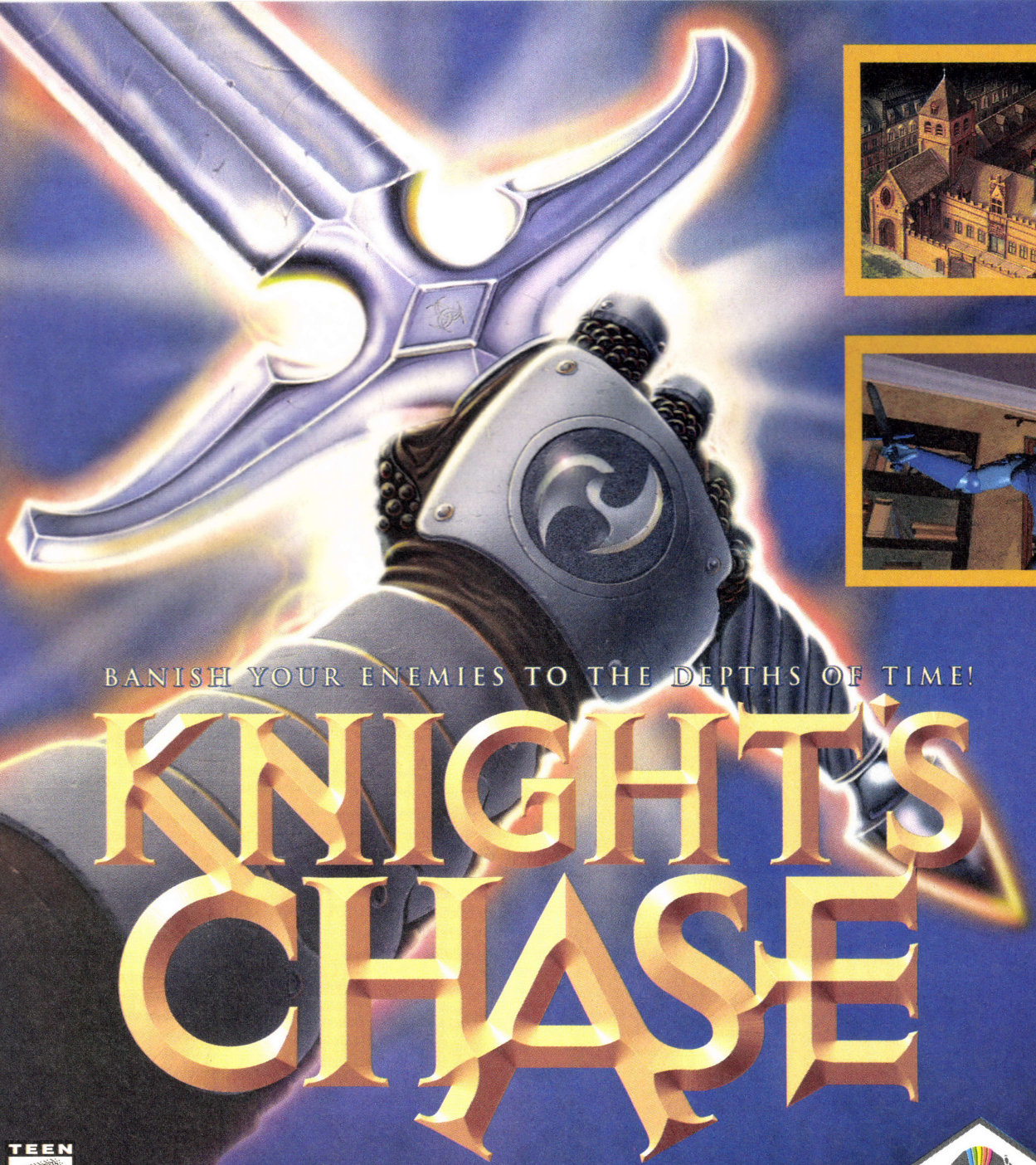


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Normality

Enter the world of Neutropolis where life is bound to the rules of normality and anything that's remotely fun has been outlawed. In this 3-D first-person perspective adventure game, you will assume the identity of a character named "Kent" who is considered to be something of a rebel. Just out of jail, down on his luck and living in the shadow of the law, your character finds himself trapped in his own apartment surrounded by "Norm-troopers." It's your job to figure out how to help him escape from his apartment, track down the goons who have repressed the "life" of the city and restore Neutropolis to a place where any "normal" person would want to live. Normality utilizes a unique three-dimensional engine to create a truly realistic world where you will encounter and interact with a wide variety of characters and mind-boggling puzzles. Over 100 motion-captured animation sequences bring the characters of Neutropolis to life, and rendered cinematic cut-scenes provide the nonchalant ambiance otherwise known as the world of Normality. **CGR**



● **Normality is a first-person perspective RPG adventure.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<http://www.interplay.com>

Developer: Interplay Distributor: Interplay Phone: (714) 553-6655
System Requirements: N/A Release Date: Summer 1996

AH-3 Thunderstrike: Air Assault

Get ready to experience the awesome firepower of the AH-3 Thunderstrike attack helicopter with AH-3 Thunderstrike: Air Assault from JVC. You'll be given seek-and-destroy missions in which you'll need to navigate your attack helicopter through hostile enemy territory and use your missiles, rockets and rapid-firing cannon to eliminate any potential threats that get in your way. There are several different campaigns to choose from, ranging from oil disputes in the Middle



East to drug interdiction in South America. You'll be given day and night missions, as well as missions that will force you to endure the elements in barren deserts and tropical jungles. The PC CD-ROM version should feature smooth VGA graphics in a fully rotational 3-D environment. **CGR**

Developer: JVC Distributor: JVC Musical Industries, Inc. Phone: (213) 878-0101 System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible, 486/66, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, VGA graphics card Release Date: Spring 1996

Pinball Maker

Design and play your very own custom pinball tables, complete with graphics, music and table styles of your choice. Pinball



Maker comes with 64 basic table layouts that have pre-positioned ramps, side guards and flippers. With the Table Editor, you can position mushroom bumpers, side bumpers, ball traps and more to your own liking. Then add a graphics and music theme, sound effects and a scoring system to complete the package. Once everything is in place, you can then put your own personally designed pinball table to the test. There's even a special "instant replay" feature that allows you to record actual gameplay for review. Pinball Maker is being developed for Windows 95. **CGR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<http://www.21stcent.com>

Developer: 21st Century Entertainment Distributor: 21st Century Entertainment
Phone: (716) 872-1200 System Requirements: Windows 95 Release Date: August 1996

Twisted Metal

Sony Interactive is bringing its smash-'em-up, arcade driving game to the PC. Awarded *Electronic Gaming Monthly's* Game of the Year for 1995 on the Sony PlayStation, Twisted Metal will deliver its explosive crash 'n burn action to your PC.

The story of Twisted Metal begins with a madman named Colypso who holds a deadly contest on the streets of Los Angeles each year. To win the battle, all other cars in the competition must be destroyed.

You'll have access to 12 customizable vehicles, including a deadly cop car, a missile-loaded semi and a killer ice-cream truck called Sweet Tooth that shoots flaming ice cream cones. Each vehicle has its own Special Weapon, but there are usually plenty of power-up weapons to pick up along the way like Fire, Power and Homing missiles, or land mines to get rid of those pesky tail-gaters. Besides their special weapons, each vehicle has its own characteristics for



● Sweet Tooth shoots flaming explosive ice cream cones as its special weapon.

handling, speed, durability, etc. The motorcycle, called Mr. Grim, is very fast and highly maneuverable, but can't take much. The trick is to avoid being hit (and don't run into anything yourself) if you want to last.

The action takes place within six apocalyptic environments, each with its own characteristics. One will have you battling through the city streets; another has



an ice-skating rink placed right in the center. If you aren't careful, you'll slide across it until you hit dry ground on the other side while your opponent takes the opportunity to nail you as an easy target.

One interesting area has you on the rooftops of some very tall buildings. Not only will you be battling your opponent here, but also the force of gravity. If you don't stop before that ledge, you lose the match. At one point you can even blast away part of the building and fall down inside for some bonus stuff. Then you'll be jumping from rooftop to rooftop for high-flying fun. Another takes place in a drainage ditch with slanted walls. Due to it being so narrow, you'll be forced to square off often since there is very few places for you to run and hide.

Your only objective is to stay in one piece while eliminating your opponent by whatever means you have at your disposal. You can take them out with your machine guns, fire your missiles or just launch your vehicle into them at full speed. You can also run over hapless pedestrians that get in your way and take air off of ramps and rooftops.

Twisted Metal's 360-degree 3-D environment allows you to watch the action from a variety of different camera perspectives. With its award-winning soundtrack and sound effects, Twisted Metal will definitely have you twisting and turning in your chair. **CGR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.sepc.sony.com/sepc/comingsoon/comingsoonindex.html>

Developer: Sony Interactive Distributor: Sony Interactive PC Software America
Phone: (415) 655-8000 System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible. Pentium
60 or better, Windows 95, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive Release Date: Spring 1996

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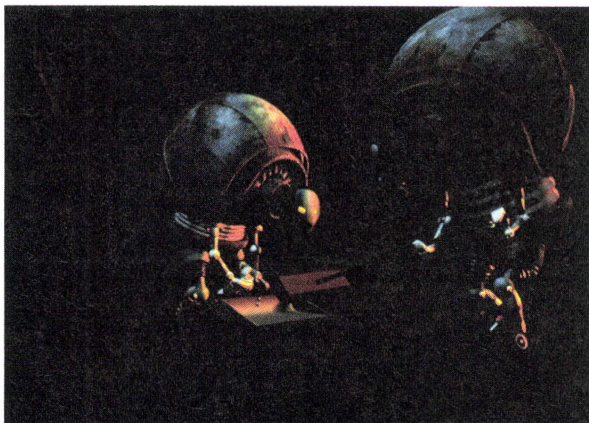


Rocket Science Launches 4 New Games:

Obsidian

Enter a surrealistic organic world, where reality is questioned, dreams challenge your perspective and mysteries must be solved. This is the world of Obsidian. Due for release during the fourth quarter of '96, this game is a 3-D adventure that offers five dream-like realms with characters that will provide players with a mind-altering experience.

Obsidian boasts a sophisticated story that will be compelling and inviting. The game will also feature integrated puzzles that developers say will allow more than 40 hours of gameplay. **CGR**



● **Obsidian is a puzzle game unlike others set in a surrealistic organic world.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
<http://www.rocketsci.com>

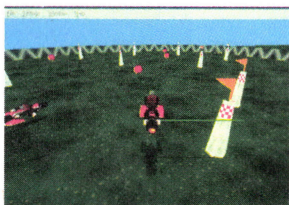
Developer: Rocket Science Games, Inc. Distributor: Rocket Science Games Phone: (800) 98R-OCKET System Requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 75, 4x CD-ROM Release Date: 4th quarter 1996

Rocket Jockey

Aaaaaand heeeeee they come around the bend...it's rocket #3, no, it's rocket #1...they're neck and neck ...aaaaaaaand it's Rocket Jockey by a nose!

Take a blast into the future as you race the clock, pilot a rocket and challenge opponents to death matches and other sporting events. The game has your rocket flying at lightning speed negotiating turns by shooting cables into arena poles with a boomerang effect. Control and skill are the player's greatest benefit in mastering the three types of gameplay that offer a total of 30 potential levels to experience.

Rocket Racing is a 10-level death trap obstacle course with competitors who will stop at nothing to win. Rocket Ball is part polo, part lacrosse in the fastest of the sports. Players have to stay alive while scoring with a ball that has constantly changing characteristics. This playing environment also has 10 levels. The final arena is Rocket War. It has 10 levels of explosive, head-on combat with other jockeys. The last jockey alive wins. **CGR**



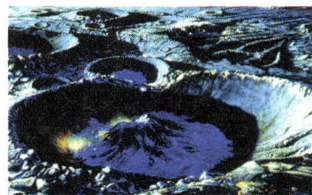
FOR MORE INFORMATION
<http://www.rocketsci.com>

Developer: Rocket Science Games, Inc. Distributor: Rocket Science Games, Inc. Phone: (800) 98R-OCKET System Requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 75, 16 MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM, 16-Bit video, 16-Bit audio Release Date: 4th quarter 1996

Ganymede

Aliens have eradicated an Earth station observatory on Ganymede. The player's mission is to avenge the deaths of those who perished in the station and prevent the aliens from establishing an attack base.

Ganymede has you battling throughout the game driving a high-speed vaporsled eliminating the enemy and their tracking mines. Skill and speed are crucial elements for this combat simulation game.



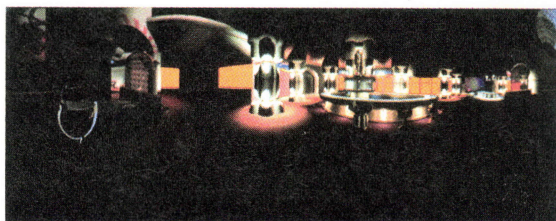
The game also features 20 multiple objective missions with bonus levels and realtime rendered 3-D space graphics and the ability to explore the entire battlefield surface. This game can also be played on a multiplayer format. **CGR**

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.rocketsci.com>

Developer: Rocket Science Games, Inc. Distributor: Rocket Science Games Phone: (800) 98R-OCKET System Requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 75, 16 MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM, 16-Bit video, 16-Bit audio Release Date: 1st quarter 1997

The Space Bar

Line 'em up and keep 'em coming. You'll need all the spirits you can get in this one as you use empathy-telepathy to flashback into the lives of aliens to solve a murder. As detective Alias Node, you'll have to employ your sleuthing skills in order to track down a ruthless killer who's purloined top-secret technology. The action takes place in the Thirsty Tentacle Bar, where you'll meet and talk to strange characters and help them solve their personal problems while searching for clues to catch the murderer before he leaves the planet. This tongue-in-cheek adventure unfolds into eight different flashback worlds in



which you'll need to make the connections between the many psychic events in order to make the catch.

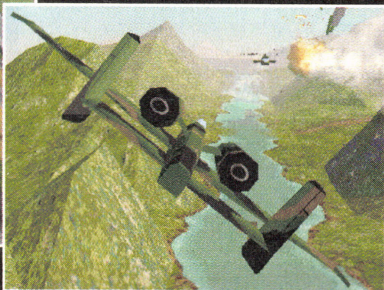
The Space Bar features a smooth-scrolling 3-D perspective with 360 degrees of freedom with which you can explore this mysterious sci-fi world. It also includes an innovative inventory control scheme based on previous adventures designed by Steve Meretzky, who is also known for his award-winning games, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Zork Zero, Leather Goddesses of Phobos and many others. Art direction was provided by Ron Cobb, who is most famous for his creative designs of the cantina aliens in the original *Star Wars* movie. **CGR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
<http://www.rocketsci.com>

Developer: Rocket Science Games, Inc. Distributor: Rocket Science Games Phone: (800) 98R-OCKET System Requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 75, 16 MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM, 16-Bit video, 16-Bit audio Release Date: 3rd quarter 1996



Introducing Silent Thunder: A10 Tank Killer II. 24 action-packed missions take you through Central America, the Middle East and Korea in one of the most devastating ground attack planes ever created. Huge explosions and texture-mapped terrain reduce other flight sims to twisted wreckage. See why PC Gamer Magazine says "The terrain graphics are unquestionably some of the the best ever seen in a flight sim." And yes, they are real screen shots. Even the big one!



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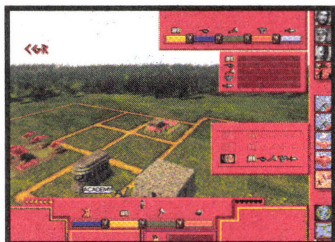
SIERRA®

Dynamix

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The Rise and Rule of Ancient Empires

Sierra On-Line has announced the early summer release of *The Rise and Rule of Ancient Empires*, an empire-building game that requires the player to employ economic, diplomatic and military strategies in order to succeed. The game brings the player to the dawn of civilization (5000 BC) when six separate cultures have emerged to stake their claim to preeminence. The different empires include the barbarian Visigoths, Mesopotamia-Persia, Egypt, Greco-Rome, India and China. Each culture must explore its environmental surroundings, construct cities, organize and train military units, research and develop new technologies, and eventually attempt to overtake their neighbors, through either diplomatic intercourse or by war, by the year 500 AD. Only one civilization will survive and leave its imprint in history. *The Rise and Rule of Ancient Empires* features stunning SVGA graphics, a user-friendly point-and-click interface with on-line, balloon help and a full-blown tutorial, and it will support network play up to four players. With its extensive depth and subtlety, *The Rise and Rule of Ancient Empires* will provide you with hours



upon hours of enjoyable gameplay as you start your city from the seeds of civilization and watch it grow across the plains into a formidable empire. *The Rise and Rule of Ancient Empires* features high-quality sound and orchestral music complete this



● Send scouts out to explore the surroundings and claim new territories to your growing empire.

truly remarkable product that will appeal to strategy-war game lovers and empire builders alike. **CGR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<http://www.sierra.com/games/riserule>

Developer: Impressions Distributor: Sierra On-Line Phone: (206) 649-9800 System Requirements: 486DX/33, Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, 8MB RAM Release Date: Early Summer

Hind

Apache lovers take note! *Hind* (Mi-24 Hind E), the latest flight simulation from Digital Integration, has been designed to allow head-to-head play with Apache. The *Hind*, a formidable Russian attack helicopter, is the perfect complement to the Apache Longbow. Bigger than the Apache, the *Hind* can carry a squad of eight fully equipped troops or four stretchers, but cannot match the Apache's agility.

The core function of the *Hind* is not only battlefield, anti-armor and support, but transportation of troops and equipment. Mission specialties include troop evacuation, personnel location and rescue and deployment of special forces units.

The *Hind* avionics are simpler than Apache's, and it is well armed with a 12.5mm turreted gun and normally carries an external load of four anti-tank missiles and four 57mm or 80mm unguided rocket pods. It can also carry 250 lbs of conventional, chemical or napalm bombs, external



fuel tanks and mine dispensers. The rocket pods can be replaced with twin AT-6 missiles, allowing a maximum of 12 to be carried. Counter measure devices include chaff, flares, IR jammer and infrared suppression boxes on the engine's exhaust.

Hind features three campaign scenarios: the Korean, which allows head-to-head play with the Apache and will have you facing mainly Western technology; the Afghanistan, which the player flies *Hinds* against the Mujahideen guerrilla army during the 1985 Russian occupation; and the Kazakhstan, pitting the *Hind* against a heavily armored rebel force using mostly Russian technology.

In addition, the game includes multiple combat levels, real world combat and



training areas, highly detailed goraud shaded texture mapped 3-D terrain, and up to 16 players via network. **CGR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
<http://www.imagicgames.com/hind.dir/hind.html>

Developer: Digital Integration Distributor: Interactive Magic Phone: (919) 461-0722 System Requirements: Windows 95, 486/33, 8 MB RAM, SVGA, Sound Blaster of compatible Release Date: April 1996



● Visit the local inn where the meat is fresh and the company warm.



Betrayal in Antara

This new release from Sierra is the sequel to Betrayal at Krondor. However, Betrayal in Antara does not continue the original story created by its predecessor. Instead, Antara has its current emperor faced with a decadent and crumbling empire that was once benevolent and thriving.

Players assume the roles of four main characters, each of whom becomes embroiled in devious plots. Bribery, nepotism and deceit run rampant and have dramatic ramifications. Travel through the game takes you above and below ground, through 3-D cities, castles, taverns, dungeons, caves, temples and more. Antara uses the same novel-like approach as its predecessor by dividing the game into interconnected chapters but has added some new features.

Betrayal at Antara utilizes a third-person perspective and features a turn-based, 3-D strategic combat system that pits the player against dozens of different opponents. An innovative new magic system keeps track of magical activity and allows the player to learn from spells cast upon them.

There are 50 speaking characters and the game offers a user-friendly interface and optional side quests and story-building encounters. In addition, levels are customizable to meet any level of playing. **CGR**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
<http://www.sierra.com>

Developer: Sierra Distributor: Sierra Phone: (206) 649-9800 System Requirements: Windows 95, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM Release Date: 4th quarter 1996

Conquest of the New World

Challenge your colonization techniques during 15th century America with Interplay's new interactive strategy epic, Conquest of the New World. Players can take on the roles of native Americans or any one of five countries, each with their own advantages or handicaps and must balance building, politics and warfare in their own grand strategy. Conquest sets itself apart from other strategy games by allowing you to choose your own victory conditions and uniting with several players to compete against each other via network.

Basic strategy premises underlie this game, having players take part in battle, acquire wealth and develop resources. Conquest boasts incredible graphics, digital music and sound effects that bring a new sense of reality to the strategy genre. **CGR**



● Command your troops on the battlefield in to conquer new lands.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
<http://www.interplay.com/website/sales/conquest.html>

Developer: Quicksilver Software Distributor: Interplay Phone: (714) 553-6655 System Requirements: Windows 95, 486/33 2x CD-ROM, 8 MB RAM, SVGA Release Date: April 1996

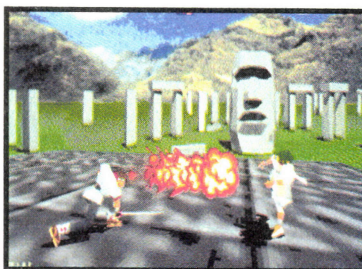
Conquest Online

Interplay has announced that it is set to launch its *Conquest of the New World* web site on April 10, 1996. This single-game dedicated Web site will feature Shockwave™ technology, literally transforming the typical mono-dimensional Web page into a high-tech, interactive multimedia experience. Gamers will be able to tap into the *Conquest of the New World* Web site free of charge and actually watch the dynamic animations of the game come to life before their eyes without downloading anything onto their hard drive. Gamers will then be invited to download the actual demo onto their system and will be offered an \$8 dollar rebate toward their purchase of the full retail product. *The Conquest of the New World* Web site can be located at <http://conquest.interplay.com> beginning April 10, 1996.



Battle Arena Toshinden

This Spring, Playmates Interactive will release the PC CD-ROM version of the immensely popular 3-D fighting game, Battle Arena Toshinden. Set in a three-dimensional environment, this enhanced version of the Sony PlayStation mega-hit follows suit with 360-degree movement, stunning graphics and realistic sound effects. Developed by Digital Dialect for Playmates Interactive, Battle Arena Toshinden will deliver the real-life fighting perspective of floating camera angles, multiple fighting techniques, a variety of arena locations and an impressive cast of challenging characters to fight. The 3-D rendered locations of each battle arena serve as the platform for hand-to-hand combat. The rules for combat are quite simple; defeat your opponent and avoid stepping (or being thrown) off the platform. If you're good enough, you'll progress to different arenas and



confront new and exotic characters to fight. This PC CD-ROM version of Battle Arena Toshinden will feature two-player network support and a special "coin-up" option that will allow players to announce that they will "challenge the winner" of the current battle. Battle Arena Toshinden is designed to be run in a DOS environment and will be Windows 95 compatible. **CGR**

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO:
<http://www.playmatestoy.com/pages/pie/tsdpc.htm>

Developer: Digital Dialect Distributor: Playmates Interactive Phone: (213) 623-4200 System Requirements: N/A Release Date: Spring 1996



Bruce Jenner's World Class Decathlon

Ever wonder what it would be like to compete in a world-class decathlon? With Interactive Magic's new release and Olympic gold medal winner, Bruce Jenner's coaching you can experience the thrill first-hand.

As the player, you compete in 10 events against seven other decathletes, all with different characteristics and talents. The game can be played in several ways: You may play each event individually, like a practice session; all 10 events may be played in the tradition of normal decathlon over a two-day span; the player may participate in a multi-decathlon season, with the finale being the World Championship.

Visual cues are used to represent ideal starting, jumping and throwing points. The

player must synchronize the mouse click with the athlete's motion and the visual cue (similar to the C-shaped gauge representing a golf swing). The key is to find the perfect point of impact defined by the cue. There are penalties for missing it and penalties and rewards vary according to the body type you have created at the beginning of the game.

Bruce Jenner is also available for coaching behind one of the locker room doors and will evaluate your character's particular attributes. You may also choose to compete against Jenner himself who is one of the many competitors you can oppose.

In addition, the player can choose levels which regulate the game's difficulty, skill points such as sprinting and jumping, and endurance pool points, which constitutes the athlete's ability to last through a full day of events.

The 10 decathlon events are the: 100 meter dash; long jump, shot put, high jump, 400 meters, 110 meter high hurdles,

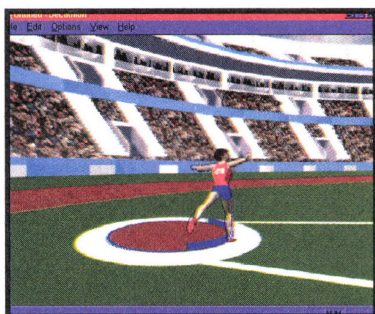


● You'll have to hold your own in each event if you want to go home with gold, silver or bronze.

the discus, pole vault, javelin and 1500 meters. Grab your best pair of running shoes and stretch those calves for this world-class event in computer gaming. **CGR**

TO DOWNLOAD DEMO
<http://www.imagicgames.com/decathlon.dir/decathlon.html>

Developer: Interactive Magic Distributor: Interactive Magic Phone: (919) 461-0722
 System Requirements: Windows 95, 486/66, 8 MB Release Date: May 1996



The War College

The sequel to The Universal Military Simulator I & II from Intergalactic

Development is about to be released. The War College is the next generation of true military simulation games, capable of modeling pivotal historic battles of the past, as well as creating realtime simulations of current events. Designed in response to numerous requests for a more powerful war-strategy game simulation engine, The War College is the only three-dimensional, solid modeled, commercially available, realtime military simulator that can rotate the battlefield a full 360 degrees. Four classic historic battles are included, consisting of Caesar vs. Pompeii at Pharsalus, Napoleon at Austerlitz, General Robert E. Lee at Antietam and Hindenburg at Tannenberg. Future expansion disks set to include classic battles from every era of history from ancient Kadesh to present day are also in the works. The War College features a graphic, user-friendly interface, complete with pull-down menus and a fully narrated interactive multimedia background that describes each and every battle in full detail. With its intuitive control interface and extensive selection of tools and commands, both novices and war-strategy game veterans will find playing The War College to be a powerful, yet non-intimidating war game experience. The War College will also support multiplayer gameplay so that you may conduct war maneuvers against your friends via modem/serial and network connection. The battlefield awaits your command, so take charge and put your hard-earned war-strategy game skills to the ultimate test with The War College. **CGR**



● If only Napoleon had a PC. He might have been able to plan the Battle of Waterloo.

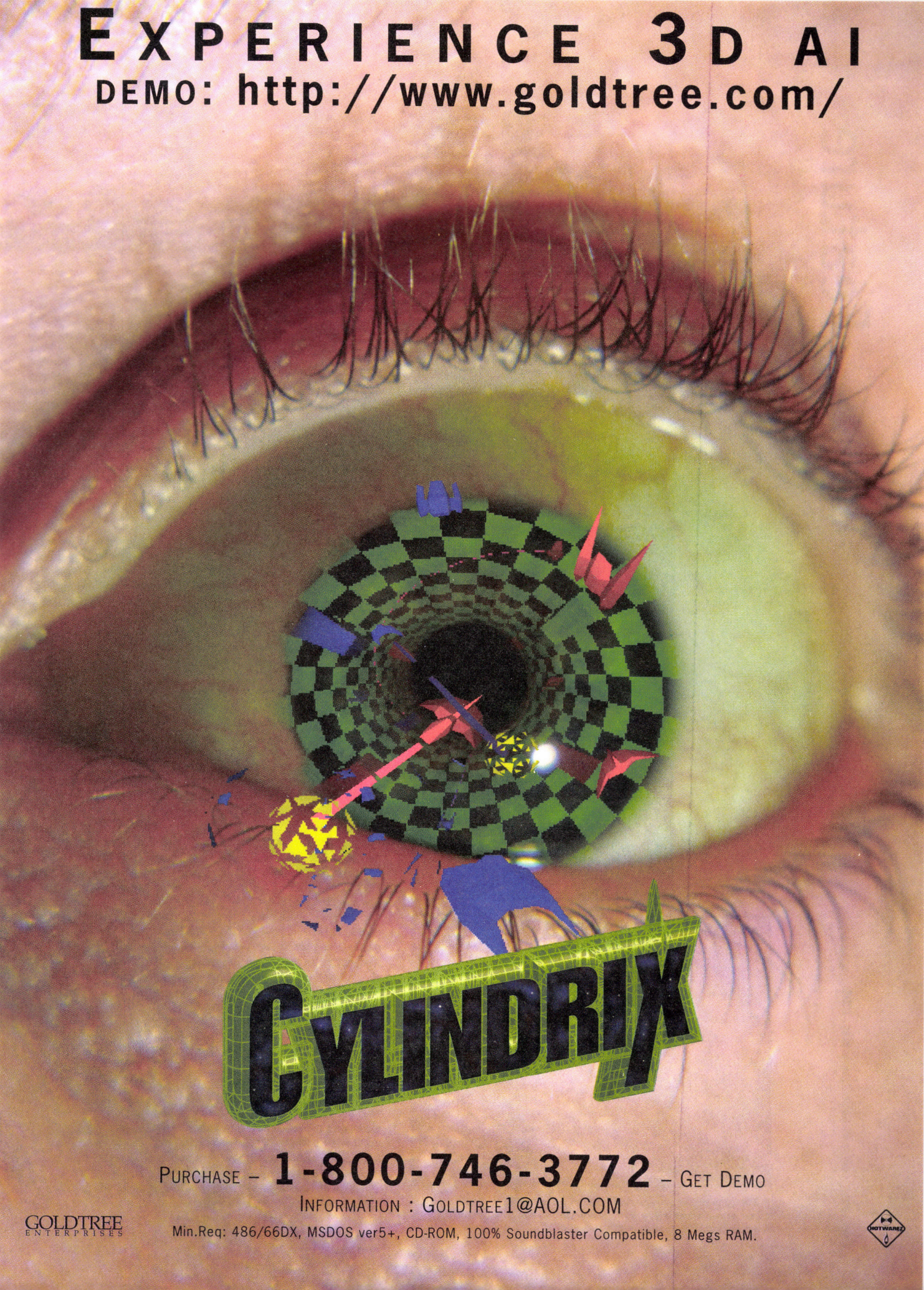
Developer: Intergalactic Development, Inc. Distributor: GameTek Phone: 305-935-3995
 System Requirements: IBM PC or compatible, 486/33, DOS 5.0+, 8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM, SVGA, Sound Card Release Date: April 1996

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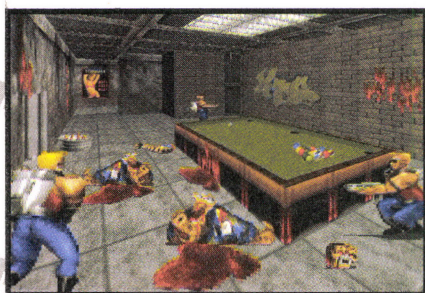
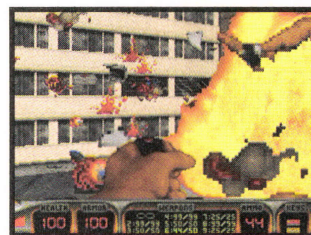
Min. Req: 486/66DX, MSDOS ver5+, CD-ROM, 100% Soundblaster Compatible, 8 Megs RAM.

GOLDTREE
ENTERPRISES



one step beyond

Keeping the "no lemon, no spoon" faith at Apogee



● The pigs are everywhere! Mutated police officers always seem to be around when you don't want them...top and bottom: Comm-Bat; middle: single-player mode.

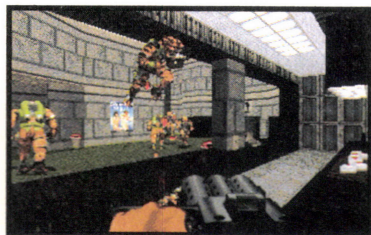
Dallas, Texas is one of those sprawling urban cities that seems to go on forever. It has grown so large that it has swallowed up many of the surrounding towns into its mass. The first thing you notice is just how flat it is. Coming from someone who lives and works in the Chicagoland area, that may seem like the pot calling the kettle black. But Chicago is positively mountainous compared to Dallas; on a clear day, you really can see forever.

The next thing you notice (and this is much more subtle) is how polite people are. If you try to merge into traffic, people actually move over or slow down to let you in. Almost everyone greets you if you make so much as half a second of eye contact. It's sort of eerie to someone from Chicago, where people are as likely to mace you as greet you (okay, that's a bit of an exaggeration). At an indoor go-kart track, where I was conducting some research for this article, my bladder decided that it was time to "use the facilities" so to speak. When I went in, there were a number of gang-type youths finishing their business. When they were done, they washed their hands, dried them, and then wiped down the edges of the sinks they used. It was very surreal.

Just on the fringes of Dallas is the suburb of Garland, home to Apogee Software and 3D Realms, and only a short highway jaunt away from Mesquite, home of id Software. I mention id only because of the interconnected history of these three companies, which dates back to 1990. In December of that year, Apogee released id's first game, Commander Keen: Invasion of the Vorticons, into shareware. id Software came into being officially on Feb. 1, 1991 in Shreveport, La. The company made gaming history with the release of Wolfenstein 3D, the very first first-person perspective 3-D action game. Tom Hall, who is 3D Realms' primary game designer and producer, was responsible for the creative direction of Wolfenstein 3D; he was one of the original employees at id.

Apogee, in the meantime, was already recognized as the industry leader in shareware marketing, having started with Kingdom of Kroz in 1987. Their model for shareware marketing is credited as the best in the world; other companies, such as Interplay Productions, will fully acknowledge this model as the credo by which they live. In case you're not aware, Apogee's approach to shareware is to release about one-third of each marketed game to the nets one to two months prior to the release of the entire game. This "stunted" game is the ultimate in tease; it offers enough of the game that people can get a good look, but not





so much that they see everything there is to see. They also include non-functioning menu selections that constantly remind people that there's more to the game than they've played. By the time the game is ready to ship, people have played the shareware enough to have a good idea of what they'll be getting, and they always seem to want more. Funny how that works, isn't it? 3D Realms is a division of Apogee that is focused solely on developing 3-D games and advancing the technological edge represented by these games.

They have five titles forthcoming: Duke Nukem 3D, Shadow Warrior,

"By the time the game is ready to ship, people have played the shareware enough to have a good idea of what they'll be getting."

Blood, Prey and an as yet untitled game (tentatively being called "Grunt," as its main character will be a Marine-type). Duke Nukem 3D, Shadow Warrior and Blood all use the same 3-D engine, while two different engines will be used for Prey and Grunt.

Duke Nukem 3D

The story of Duke Nukem 3D is a long one. The rough draft was premiered at Winter CES '95 in Las Vegas. Since that time, there have been several setbacks. The beta code for Duke Nukem 3D unintentionally hit the Internet and spread to the service providers in January; this was completely against Apogee's wishes. The Apogee team was planning on releasing the final shareware version around the middle of March, which would include the first seven levels of the commercial version. Because the beta version that got released was not what Apogee wanted the world to see, the team went into crisis management mode.

The Duke design crew started working in shifts around the clock in order to get the official hardware where they wanted it to be. This version made it onto the nets at the end of February; if you've only seen the beta version (check the tag screen as you exit the game; the word BETA is part of the top banner), you ought to down-

load the official version. A lot has been added that was not in the beta. The boxed shareware hit the retail shelves on March 4; by the time you read this, the final commercial version (with all the levels) should have shipped. I say "should have" because the official ship date is, "When it's done!" You'll be able to order it directly from Apogee, and in-store distribution will be handled by FormGen. So how come the beta version got uploaded to the nets? It wasn't accidental, but it also wasn't Apogee. Someone they gave a beta copy to did it, and he did it willfully, purposefully and shamefully. Fortunately, Apogee "fingerprints" all the beta copies they hand out, so they know who it was. Needless to say, that person will no longer be getting any inside info from Apogee. He's a slug and a rotten bastard, and he should be permanently barred from this industry. But enough about that.

The story line of Duke Nukem 3D is standard science-fiction B-movie. It is set in the future, and aliens have invaded Los Angeles. They are making their assault from an orbital platform. After you have cleared L.A. and surrounding vicinity of the alien threat, you'll make your way to the platform and take them on there. The weaponry employed is pretty much what you've come to expect from FPP games: pistol, shotgun, chaingun, RPG, etc. Other weapons employed in the game include a Freeze Ray, a Shrink Ray, Laser Trip Mines, and a weapon currently being called "The Pulverizer." Very little can stand up to more than about three shots from the Pulverizer, but ammo will be scarce.

Duke Nukem 3D is a first-person perspective 3-D game, and yes, there's a huge difference between it and most of what has come before. For one thing, you can run multiplayer games in 800x600 mode,



● **Let's not kid ourselves: Duke Nukem 3D has lots of animated violence. If you find it disagreeable, don't buy the game.**

although owners of 486/33s and those with less than 16MB RAM may want to forego this as the framerate gets chopped. The only other FPP multiplayer games that have been worth a damn are DOOM, DOOM II and Heretic (see Frank Snyder in "Log Off" this month for more about why this is). Another major difference is that the maps are truly 3-D. DOOM's engine runs only in 2-D, but tricks your eyes into seeing a 3-D world. The Duke engine allows for over-and-under passage; it is an interesting crossbreed between what DOOM does and what Descent does.

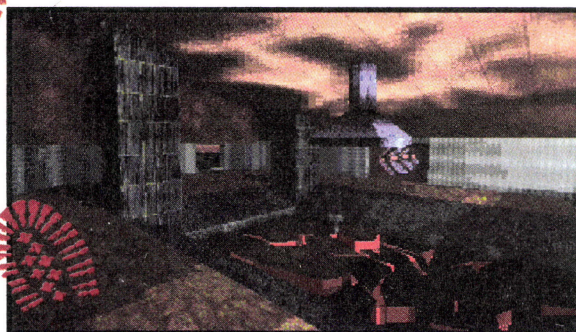
There are a number of homages paid in Duke Nukem 3D. For one, his voice, though sounding for all the world like Ronald Reagan's, is actually a tribute to the voicework of the biker in LucasArts' Full Throttle. The Apogee squad is a big fan of this title; both George Broussard (president of 3D Realms) and Tom Hall rate it highly. You'll also find at



least one reference to Dark Forces in the final version. And, after id Software spanked Commander Keen on one of the hidden levels of DOOM II, what else could Apogee do but return the favor? In case you haven't found the reference yet, check out the area behind the altar on level three of the shareware version of DN3D.

The Duke team wanted their game to be different from what has gone before. Although they stick to the precept so adequately summed up by Broussard, "If something doesn't blow up every 10 seconds, there's something wrong," they've also tried to outdistance the competition by making the environment plastic. Almost anything you see in Duke Nukem 3D can be blown up. This can change the game drastically: If you blow up a bridge that you need to get across later, you'd better make certain not to expend all the fuel in your jetpack before you get there.

Duke Nukem 3D is bound to be a gigantic seller. The reason for this, though, will have less to do with the game's admittedly great pre-packaged levels, and more to do with the editor that will be included with the game. Not only can you work in 2-D map mode, there's also a "virtual Duke" mode that allows you to walk around the map you've created and change all of the visual and strategic areas on the fly. Made a wall too high? Point the cursor at it and lower it with a keystroke. Don't like the texture of the floor? Point the cursor at it, hit a key, and choose from any other texture. There's even room for you to add your own textures and bitmaps to it. One of the biggest problems with DEU and ADE2 (the hacked-together DOOM editors) was that you had to quit out of the program, load the map you had created, and take notes on how to make it look better. The DN3D editor will allow you to switch between 2-D and 3-D modes on the fly, and textures can be stretched or compressed to fit the walls you make. I looked at the necessities for doing this, and it makes DOOM look like grandma's jalopy. The reasoning behind including the editor and making it fairly user-friendly is marketing: Apogee wants people playing Duke Nukem 3D three years from now.



● Although none of the enemies have been laid into Prey as of this writing, much of the artistic feel of the game is in place.

A quick note to parents and members of the Christian Coalition: Duke Nukem contains violence and gory animations. There is a parental lock mode which cuts it down to approximately a PG-13 rating, though.

Apogee is notoriously unapologetic about their titles, standing by their credo, "If you don't like it, don't play it." Hate mail gets tossed, because they're in the market of making games that make money, not appeasing the religious and somewhat oversensitive right.

Prey

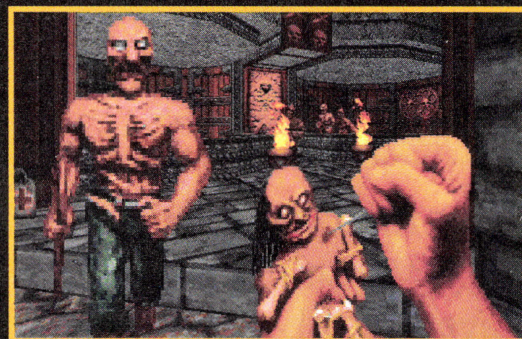
Who are you? And, more importantly, do you really want to know? Prey forces you to face the question of your existence in a manner that Kafka never could. The story line will make your skin crawl: You are abducted by aliens, and wake to find yourself in an alien environment. This, in and of itself, is merely strange; what is unnerving is that the aliens have surgically interwoven you into a suit of unknown technology, and then seemingly abandoned you. Is this a game? Some sort of



Covered in Blood

The second game based on the DN3D engine is called Blood. Though the story line is pretty thin at the time of this writing, it has to do with yet another demon-worshipping cult, the Secret Society of Tchernobog. Enemies you'll go up against include zombies, gargoyles, hellhounds, and, of course, their masters. The best thing about this game is its choice of weaponry. The default weapon is a pitchfork; other weapons include a lighter and a can of hairspray, dynamite and a voodoo doll-and-pin setup that was easily the funniest thing I've seen in a game this year.

There's also a John Woo-type double flaregun that causes your enemies to burst into flames (be careful of turning your back on an enemy who's apparently being roasted alive; if there's water around, he can jump in and put himself out). Blood has a very Gothic feel to its textures and architecture, making for a compelling horror-genre game.



● The incredibly effective voodoo doll weapon.

test? You will have to put the puzzle together as the story line progresses. Strange aliens seem to pour from every crevasse, and you need to keep your wits about you simply to survive.

Prey represents the coming wave of technological advancement in 3-D gaming. The engine gives the player a true six degrees of freedom (three axes for sight and three axes for movement), unlike the hit game DOOM, which is simply a 2-D world made to fool your eyes into thinking it is 3-D. The graphics are lush compared to DOOM (and even Quake), and the technology it will incorporate is cutting edge in every sense of the word. The enemies you will encounter will be polygon-based with texture-mapped features, as opposed to sprite-based. These sorts of tricks are usually designed on Silicon Graphics machines and demand heavy resources from your processor, resulting in reduced gameplay speed. Gamers everywhere have seen SGI design; enemies appear to be walking through water or mud, and, despite everything Da Vinci sketched in his notebooks concerning musculature as it is related to movement, this tack has not yet managed to make its way into games. What I saw in Texas convinced me that somebody is finally going to get it right. True dynamic light sourcing will also make an appearance in Prey. Most light sourcing in other 3-D games has been static or only partially dynamic; e.g., a flickering light on a wall as "produced" by, say, a torch. In Prey, the light sourcing will change according to the whims of the light source itself; wave a flashlight beam around the room and the beam will actually highlight the way it is supposed to, glinting off shiny objects and refracted by corners. Say goodbye to light sources that act as though they have an "edge," as though they are miniature lasers.

One of the nicest features of Prey is its separation of movement from bolt-frames. When you play DOOM (or Descent, Dark Forces, etc.), you may have noticed that your eyes are locked to the front, as though you are wearing a halo for a broken neck and have your eyes pinned in place. In Prey, your line of sight is almost completely unhinged from your movement; although you can't spin your head around in a circle (à la Linda Blair in *The Exorcist*), you can at least check out what's in your peripheral vision. This will manifest itself in Apogee's dedication to VR environments; drivers for all of the popular VR headsets will be incorporated into the code. To top all of these features off, Prey will not only give you network, modem and serial play, but you'll also be able to play via the Internet (although taunting

someone in Swahili may not be as effective as you'd think). Okay, so all of the above is cool. Now it's time to add to the coolness by a factor of about 50. If you are playing Prey via the Internet and decide to exit a level, you'll be transported to a lobby-like area that will point you to different Prey games that may have different rules. Let's

"Prey will use the latest and greatest means to achieve their end..."

say you've just come off a 20-hour Comm-Bat jag on one Internet server, and are ready for something different. So you direct your attention to a far-off server, enter a game there, and find that you can't shoot. "What fun is this?" you ask yourself. Suddenly someone comes wandering over to you and a chat window pops up. Alternatively, let's say that you're getting a little low on health. Leave the level you're on, pop to a server in Sri Lanka where someone has created a level that is health-rich, then pop back into the original level you were on. Welcome to the Internet, folks; it's here and, for Apogee, it's now. Perhaps one day it will be known as the World Prey Web.

Of course, this journey into the world of the Web begs the question, and the answer, of

course, is that Prey will include a level editor. A *very advanced* level editor. With it, you can not only design what would be recognized by most people as standard Prey levels, you could conceivably create a level that falls well outside the bounds of what most people would call a game; a spreadsheet, for example, or a level of Face-Tris.

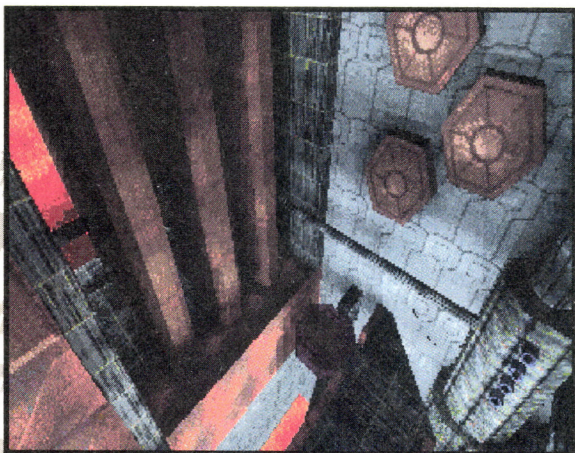
It sounds weird, but it works. And it does what nobody else in their petty little differences of opinion and market share have tried to do: create a real, working virtual community on the Web.

The team that is building Prey is basically the core of the team that brought you Rise of the Triad. Even Apogee admits that RotT was a whole lot less than it should have been, hobbled by its roots as Wolfenstein 3D Part 2. The compromise that had to be reached between design and technology was one that the team was ultimately disappointed with; even though the game is fun, it is less than its designers and programmers intended. Prey will use the latest and greatest means to achieve their end, and the code will be optimized to the Nth degree, meaning that even

those with 486-based systems will be able to glean more than their fair share of enjoyment from it. Because much of the code is already in place for Prey, the designers can feel free to create the game that will continue to rock the gaming world for many years to come. **CGR**

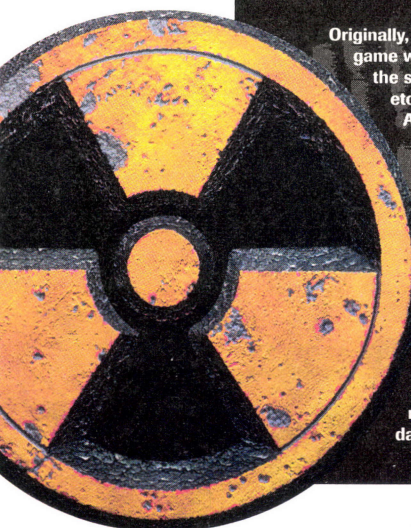
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● Prey will be fully immersive, with a true "six degrees of freedom" environment.



Become the Shadow Warrior

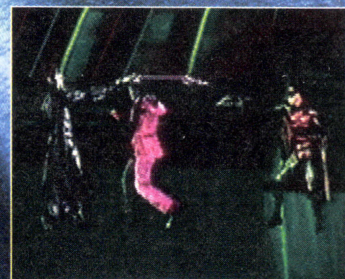
Originally, Shadow Warrior was going to be a straight 3-D game with a ninja as the main character that would use all the standard ninja weapons: swords, throwing stars, sai, etc. Apogee's first playable build of SW was one which Apogee was a bit concerned with: No one in the office wanted to play it, because it was pretty darn dull. This is how they decide when to release a game, by letting the folks in the office have first whack at it; they immediately knew that it needed to go back to the drawing board. So they reworked the concept, upgrading the main character to something they describe as, "a ninja, but with a really bad attitude." In addition to the myriad weapons employed in the game, you'll also be able to control a few vehicles, including a tank and a boat. A combination of traditional ninja weapons, modern arms and magic was finally decided on, and the enemies you'll face off against range from ninja trainees to the demons they worship. A release date has not been set.



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Dynamic



DOS CD-ROM



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Link Your Synapses for Connective Fun Connections: It's A Mind Game

It has a loyal television audience worldwide and has now become a CD-ROM game. This very popular TV show hosted by James Burke can now be found in your favorite software store. Connections: It's A Mind Game takes the basic premise of the show and turns it into a Myst-like game in which you will battle the forces of chaos by uncovering the hidden links and connections in history.

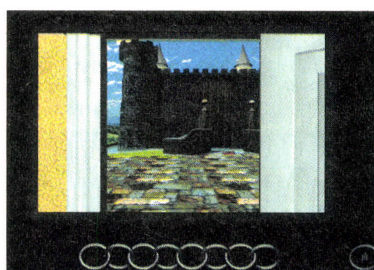
You begin by appearing in the middle of what looks like a medieval village common area. You'll see a castle, but if you swing around behind you there will be a door. And this being a graphical adventure, you'll see the pointer turn into a hand, which it will do anytime you come across a hot spot. Click on the door and then enter. Turn to your left and you'll get the game introduction from James Burke. He



● Make the connection between inventions to save the world from chaos.



explains that the game takes place in the Web, a term he coined way back in the late 1970s as a metaphor for the interactive structure of knowledge and history. He says that while he doesn't take credit for

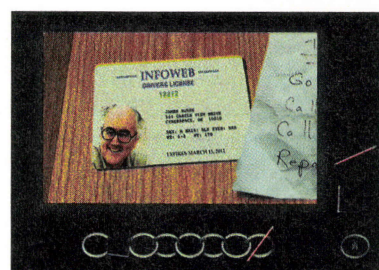


of paper to read it and then drag it to the right side. Then read the drivers license. This is where you will begin to need to keep some notes. Write down what you think you will need off of the license. Next

click on the right-hand drawer and take the carbon paper. It will go into your links and you can click on the item for an explanation of the item's place in history. These video vignettes are presented in classic Burke style and of course are fascinating and interesting.

But once again the idea is to link one invention to another.

Connections: It's A Mind Game is a two CD-ROM game that comes with different levels of gameplay. It runs okay on my 486/66, but the screens do scroll like in Myst, which means they are a tad on the slow side. The village (and elsewhere), as



you will find, is populated with full-motion video characters which are a nice touch, however you can't skip past them once you've heard their initial lines. This would have been a nice enhancement to have as it is in any graphical adventure. The puzzles are challenging enough and the graphics are good. The game music, by the way, is classical to begin with, which gives it an air of intelligencia. Connections: It's A Mind Game should appeal to a graphical adventure gaming audience, but it is a step outside of the genre in that you are learning about real things and events. Connections: It's A Mind Game was developed by Some Entertainment, who previously did the game Wrath of the Gods. My recommendation is to connect with this game. **CGR**

-by Steven Greenlee

"Connections...should appeal to a graphical adventure gaming audience..."

using the term in referencing the Internet, it is a common thing for him to get that credit as well.

After you receive the introduction you'll be off to save the universe. As a graphical adventure and puzzle game, you will need to explore carefully. On the desk you'll notice lots of action areas. First start with the typewriter. Click on the handle to get a message. Then take the pencil and open the middle desk drawer. Click on the piece

WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.discovery.com>

Distributor: Discovery Channel Multimedia Phone: (800) 678-3343
System Requirements: Windows/Mac Price: \$49.95

C & C: The Covert Operations

Are you a big fan of Command & Conquer and have already played through the entire game on both sides? Then you'll be glad to know that Westwood Studios has created a new missions disk called Command & Conquer: The Covert Operations and is now available for those of you who didn't get enough the first time around. The Covert Operations contains 15 new solo-play missions and 10 new multiplayer maps. Seven are for the Global Defense Initiative who fight to save the world from its evil nemesis, while eight missions are for the Brotherhood of Nod who have the fine idea of controlling the world and will crush anybody in its way. One of the new features of the add-on pack is the ability for the gamer to decide what order to play the missions in. As in the original, you have to secure or protect the rare mineral Tiberium. This mineral controls the world's economic balance. C & C is a game based upon the Dune II engine and interface.

These new levels also take place on different terrain and bring in some additional features not found in the original. **CGR**

Distributor: Virgin Interactive
Phone: 707-833-8710
System Requirements: 486/66+, MS-DOS 5.0+,
Command & Conquer game Price: \$24.95

WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.vie.com>



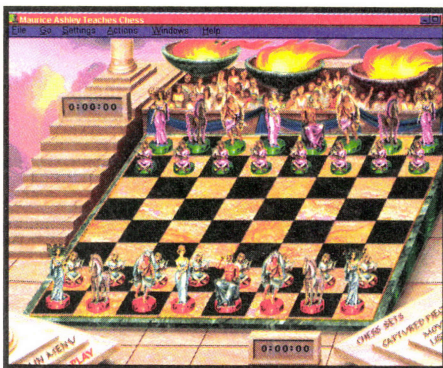
● There are 15 new missions for you to undertake in C & C: The Covert Operations.



Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess

Maurice Ashley is one of the world's best chess players and is now out with his own CD-ROM to teach you this very old game or enhance your present-day game. The 29-year-old Ashley is a chess force to be reckoned with. In 1986 he earned the National Master ranking and by 1993 he was in the U.S. Chess top 50. It was also in 1993 that he became an International Champion. He is now working on becoming a Grandmaster and he would (will) be the first African-American to hold that honor. He also has an excellent background for teaching chess, having coached two Harlem school chess teams that consistently win national titles. If you're a beginner or an intermediate player, you will find Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess a valuable program to own.

One of the first things you'll notice after installing the CD-ROM is that Ashley comes across as a fun and very likable guy. There's no heavy gray-cell killing liturgies here on chess gameplay. The mood is upbeat and fun. He starts off with the



● When you're ready, choose your favorite chess board like the one using Greek Gods.

very basics of explaining all the pieces and then proceeds from there into gameplay. Each area of explanation comes with interactive areas where you can practice what Ashley has just explained. These challenge areas are an effective means of teaching and learning. He also uses video chalkboards just like football announcers on television to show you how to visualize the chess board, to spot strong and weak areas and how to move your pieces accordingly.

I found the 10 interactive grandmaster games to be very interesting, and the chess engine seems to be solid for the intended user. This is the only CD-ROM of its type endorsed by the Professional Chess Association. Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess gets my recommendation. **CGR**

Distributor: Davidson & Associates
Phone: (800) 457-8357
System Requirements: Windows
Price: N/A

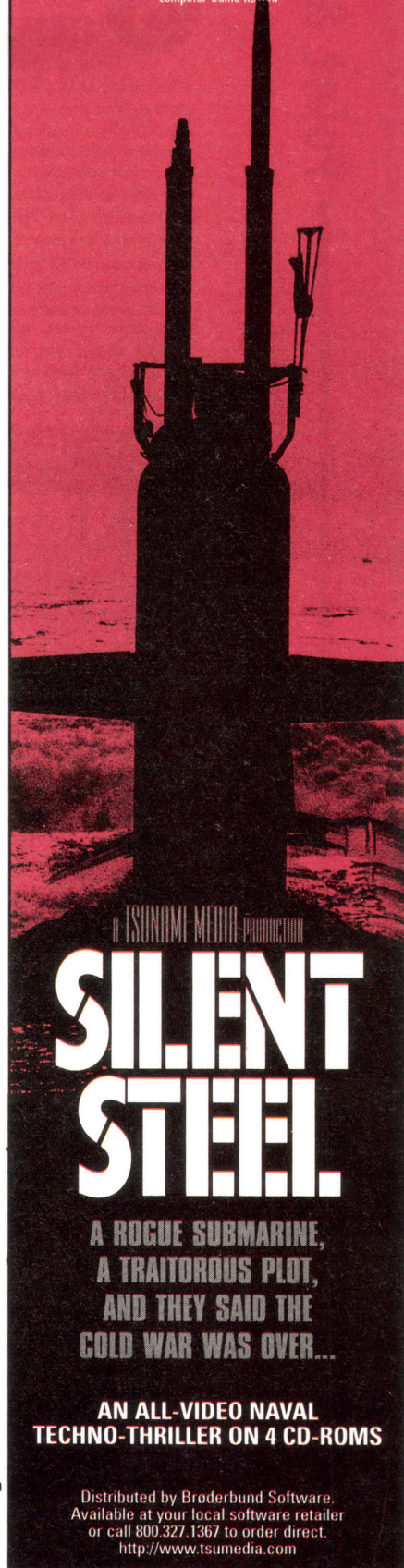
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Consumer Reports Cars...

Spring has sprung and you might be in the mood for a new automobile. If so, the Consumer Reports Cars: The Essential Guide is a must-have. No one has a better name in giving consumers the real story behind products and services, and this CD-ROM is no exception. Of course it is fun to take a Sunday afternoon and go out to the car lots and take a look around, but you can save yourself some unnecessary steps by using this CD-ROM first. Creative Multimedia has done an excellent job of putting together a usable and powerful database which still retains a very friendly interface.

Cars does contain an extensive database of ratings, recommendations and unbiased judgments on cars, minivans, pickups and sport utility vehicles of more than 7,300 makes, models, body styles, new and used from 1987 through the 1996 model year. One area which I really liked was the Predicted Reliability and Frequency-of-Repair information. You will be able to see how different parts hold up. These parts are numerous but include



● Cars: The Essential Guide has thousands of pictures of cars and trucks.

things like the electrical system (have you had to find your fuse box lately?) or drive trains. Not all that glitters is gold and Consumer Reports Cars really does sort the pyrite from the gold.

If you are serious about your car shopping, you can sort the database by a variety of preferences including cost, gas mileage and ride comfort among a host of others. Other Cars goodies includes some 30 minutes of interactive video that helps prepare you for sales pitches and how to inspect a car (which is invaluable if you plan

on buying a used car). Then there is another area where you get the rating and last word on auto products and accessories. What could possibly be better than this CD-ROM? In this case only one thing, and that is the price. You can get Consumer Reports Cars: The Essential Guide for about 20 bucks. **CGR**

Distributor: Creative Multimedia Phone: (503) 306-4351
System Requirements: Windows Price: \$20

WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.creativemm.com>

Generation War: Near Dead

Now for something totally different. It was only a matter of time before this was done, but writer/director Phil Flora is the first, to the best of my knowledge. Flora has made a movie for the computer using nothing but computer-generated sets. The film is called *Generation War: Near Dead* and has all the very latest in computer-generated effects and sets like its blockbuster silver screen cousin *Toy Story*, virtual stunt doubles as in *Judge Dredd* and *Terminator II*, multilevel composites like in *Star Wars* and matched moves like in *Forrest Gump*. "Nearly every special effect in Hollywood's bag of tricks is now achievable on a personal computer," says Flora, "and *Generation War: Near Dead* has them." The actors, on the other hand, are alive and kicking.

The 30-minute movie takes place in 2025 America after the government has gone bankrupt and corporations pretty much rule the roost. These corporations have moved off-shore and made their own little island countries in unclaimed areas of the ocean called Data Havens. America has few or no jobs and just about everybody is on welfare. Young people are

forced to volunteer for work assignments for seven years in the national service corps and there is a whole new police force that runs down the kids who avoid the service. These slackers are called Delinks and the movie concerns itself with one of these Delinks getting nabbed by kiddie cops and being rescued by some fellow slackers. This is the beginning of a full-scale generation war.

Over 40 sets were modeled and digitized for the movie, and one of the sets—New Washington—has nearly one million polygons, more than most of the *Toy Story* sets. The movie will play on any 486 running Windows 3.1 or Windows 95.



Generation War: Near Dead is in the standard Microsoft Video for Windows format, but you will need to follow the directions to install the movie and get the best view.

We can debate the merits of the story, which I thought were okay. My only real complaint were some scenes, like in a corridor, etc., seemed to be a little too long. Otherwise, the movie looks good and the acting was surprisingly spot-on, even though Flora says he will use SAG actors for the next movie. Flora tells *CGR* that he is going back and making some enhancements like redoing it at 30 fps so it will play better in 640x480 screen modes. He also says work is beginning on the sequel which will be called *Belt Wars*. In addition to the CD-ROM movies, Flora says he has just put up a new Web site that complements the movie story but in a graphics and stills format similar to a graphic novel **CGR**

WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.webmovie.com>

Distributor: Phil Flora Phone: (500) 44-MOVIE
System Requirements: Windows
Price: \$14.95



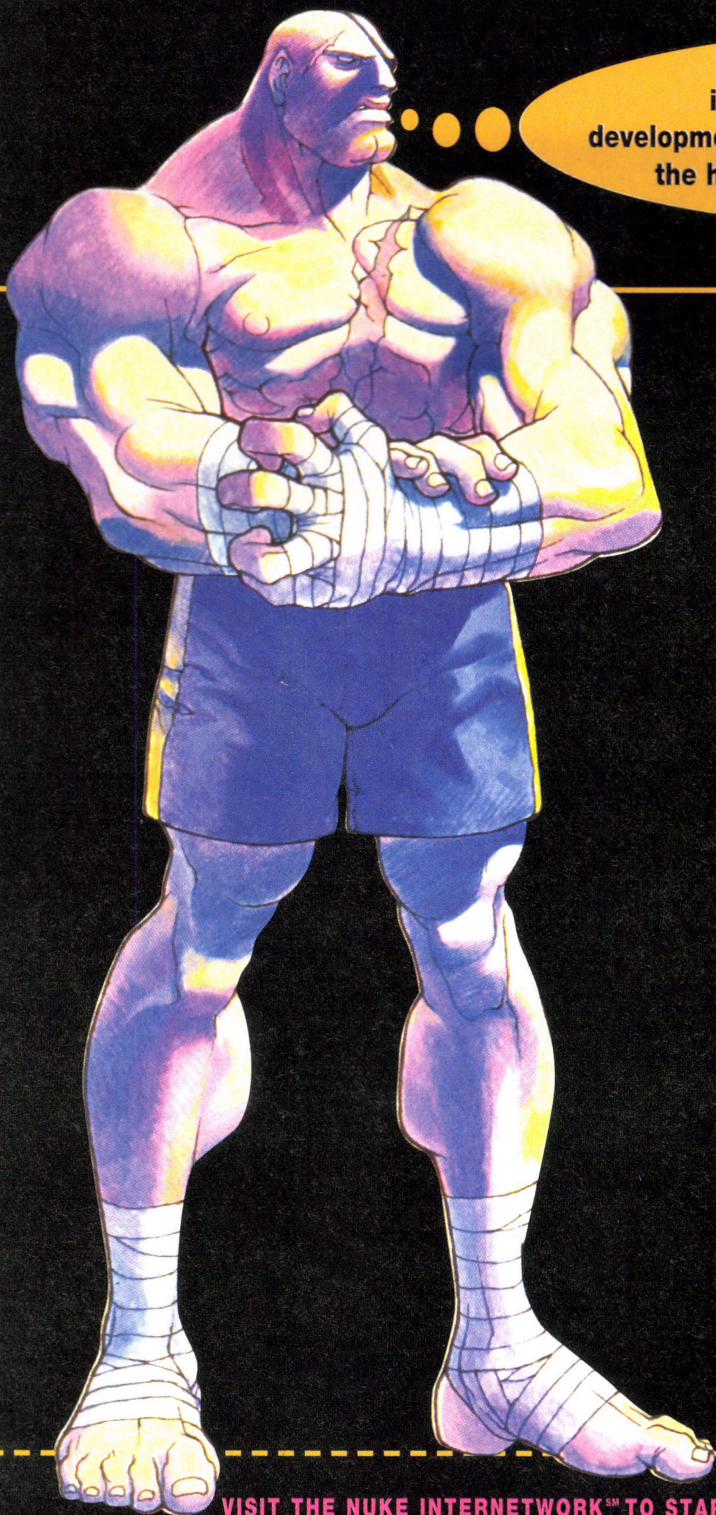
Paper Animal Workshop

Do you remember the cop Decker from *Blade Runner*? Remember how he was always making paper animals? There is now a CD-ROM that takes you step-by-step in mastering the craft of origami. The CD-ROM is called: *Paper Animal Workshop*.

Paper Animal Workshop features 3-D animations adapted from advanced CAD software which is the same found in PAW's predecessor *The Greatest Paper Airplanes*. Two of my favorite CD-ROMs, GPA and PAW, were developed by the great team at KittyHawk Software. You can follow the animations to learn how to fold paper animals and you can print out designs to help you along. Get this CD-ROM now to create a crow, a crane or a turtle among many others.

Distributor: SAP Phone: (800) 711-0582
System Requirements: Windows/Mac
Price: \$24.95

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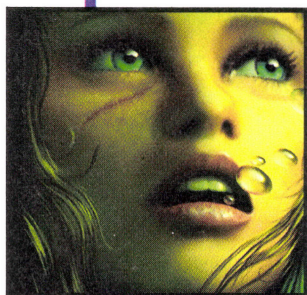
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Sinkha

It's been almost three years now since I began reviewing non-gaming entertainment titles for *CGR* and I believe this is the first time that I have been totally blown away by a title. In this case, it's Sinkha, a graphic novel on Macintosh CD-ROM that will be soon released for Windows. But it is much more than a graphic novel, because it has a stunning presentation of rendered graphics and animations made with Strata. Strata is a system which rivals Silicon Graphics machines; just look at the pictures on this page to get an idea of the take-your-breath-away effects.

Sinkha is the work of renowned science-fiction artist Marco Patrito. Patrito is known for his graphic novels and this is the Italian native's first attempt at porting his startling futuristic vision over to the computer. He has done it with a resounding success in my eyes.

As you install the game you will need to check the version of Quicktime you're using because you will definitely have to have the latest version in order to run it. After an easy and lightning-quick install, the fun begins. You'll see from the very beginning that this is more than just watching something on a computer screen. The sounds are as rich and as textured as the graphics. From the opening



"...just look at...this page to get an idea of the take-your-breath-away effects."



● **A** The graphics for Sinkha were created using a Strata graphical workstation.

fly-by of the mountains you'll be drawn into a revolutionary world that Patrito has created. This world is dark and bleak with a human population weighed down by despair as heavy as the haze from sulphuric acid clouds that surround the world. Soon we meet the mischievous young girl Hyleyn who is desperately searching for a way out of her miserable existence. It is when she happens upon the Sinkhas that her destiny takes a new path. The Sinkhas are gods to the people of this planet and they are much more advanced than any



human. They aren't human, but when one of their ships lands on Hyleyn's world, a Sinkha in a male form catches the voyeuristic eye of the precocious Hyleyn. She soon talks the Sinkha into taking her with him when they blast off, but little does Hyleyn know that more adventure, a la Aliens, waits for her on the Sinkha machine world. A dark force lies deep in the Sinkha home-world and nothing will be the same when it wakes up.

This captivating story is illustrated beyond anything you have seen to date. There is text, static pictures and amazing animations. Be sure to watch for little things in the animations like the people on the bridge and their light source or the fish in the pond. Both the fish and the water are spectacular to watch. It took Patrito three years and tens of thousands of hours at his computer (in his Beinasco, Italy home) to bring Sinkha to life. The combination of science and art has reached a new level of quality with this truly 3-D multimedia graphic novel distributed by Mojave. **CGR**

MOJAVE WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.mogames.com>

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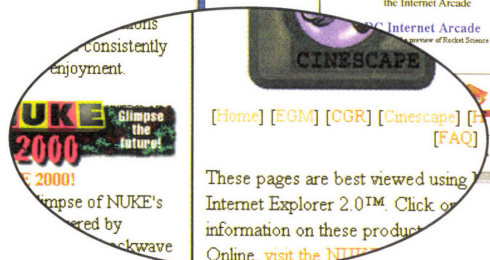
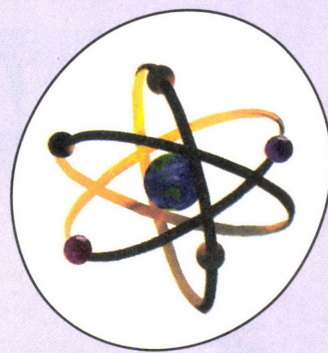
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HARDWARE

Turtle Beach 8x CD-ROM Drive TBS-8010 This Drive is No Turtle

Speed seems to be the most sought-after element in any computer solution, be it processor speed, video speed or drive speed. Nowhere is that more noticeable than the CD-ROM drive market, where just a scant two years ago we saw double-speed CD-ROM drives as the be-all and end-all of the computing world. Well, all of that's behind us now. Quad-speed drives hit the market en masse at the end of 1994, and sales of PCs for personal use hit an all-time high. You can hardly find a game on the shelves these days that will even accept a single-speed drive as part of its minimum system requirements; double-speed is considered the low-end of the market. Since the advent of CD-ROM drives, we've seen single-, double-, triple-, quad-, hex- and eight-speed drives hit the streets. Originally they all used their own proprietary interface schemes, with Mitsumi, Panasonic and Toshiba interfaces leading the pack. Over time, there has been a migration to the IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) specification; this is the spec you find on most modern hard drives. What this means is that you can hook up your CD-ROM drive directly to the motherboard connection for an IDE drive. Almost all PCs have one, and some have two. Of course, any CD-ROM drive that you buy will come with an interface card that will be compatible with the ISA (Industry Standard Architecture) bus; some

specialty drives may even include a PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) bus card.

The Turtle Beach 8x CD-ROM Drive Kit gives you an exceptional drive. Not only does it offer true 1200KB/sec data transfer performance, it also has the fastest seek time I've run across on any CD-ROM drive: 140 milliseconds. Mix in a 256KB buffer and the fact that the drive conforms to the Enhanced IDE spec, a faster, backward compatible version of the straight IDE spec, and you have a real technological winner. I checked this drive out with several different game installation programs which included a CDD speed test as part of their regular setup routine; all of them reported transfer rates that were right in the ballpark of 1200KB/sec. Some free-ware utilities I've laid my paws on recently also returned good results.

The drive's price is in the general neighborhood of reasonable, although I think it runs a little high. However, it could hardly be called unreasonable, considering that quad-speed drives are currently running in the neighborhood of \$200+. Included in the bundle is the 1996 version of the Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia and the Turtle Beach Systems Internet CD-ROM, which gives you instant access and setup for an Internet account. Totally uninspired bundle, but that's that.

Installation is a snap, with one caveat. If you're one of those "Iron Horse" types who runs

anything other than DOS 6.2 or better, you'll never be able to install this drive. It requires MSCDEX version 2.23 in order to run properly, and this version of MSCDEX works only in DOS 6.2 and up. By the way, the "and up" portion of that sentence includes Windows 95. If you have a second IDE connector on your motherboard that has nothing connected to it, I highly recommend bypassing installation of the interface card altogether. It will conflict with the second IDE port, and who really needs to use a slot when you don't have to? Simply connect the interface cable to the free IDE connector on the motherboard, hook up the CD-

"Not only does it offer true 1200KB/sec data transfer, it also has the fastest seek time I've run across..."

ROM as detailed in the manual, and install the software. If you don't have a second IDE connector on your motherboard, install the interface card. Windows 95 users: Installation is somewhat different for you; refer to the instruction manual for assistance. The manual, by the way, is one of the best I've ever seen for a hardware product, despite the poor quality paper it's printed on. Extra bonus: A small double-headed screwdriver comes with the kit, so you don't even need your own tools. It's the little things in life...

The only problem I've run into with this drive is its rotational speed, and it has more to do with CD-ROM manufacturing than with the drive itself. Occasionally you'll get a CD that is not quite up to spec in balance. As a result, the drive will rattle and occasionally misread with an unbalanced CD in the tray. Like I said, it has nothing to do with the drive, and everything to do with the disc. Just keep an ear out for the telltale rattle and hum; whenever you hear it, check the disc carefully for irregularities and/or debris. **CGR**

● An exceptional offer of speed versus price, the TBS-8010 is the best drive I've seen.



WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.tbeach.com>

CGR Rating 93

Manufacturer: Turtle Beach Systems
Phone: (717) 767-0200 Requirements: DOS 6.2+
Price: \$400.00

Slip-Gliding Away

When I got this in, I thought it'd be great for MechWarrior 2. Boy, was I wrong. However, credit where credit's due. It does a terrific job in Windows. I checked the Glidepoint out with both Windows and DOS games, and found that, while it's wonderful for Windows, its performance in DOS is mixed. The reason, of course, is the greater variety of DOS games. Most Windows games are fairly static, so mouse control at speed isn't really called for. I checked out several DOS action games that can use a mouse: MechWarrior 2, Duke Nukem 3D, et al. In all cases the mouse control was not nearly good enough, but if you run primarily strategy-type titles, such as wargames, SimCity and the like, the Glidepoint is not a bad little setup. Perhaps Alps should think about making a serial port data switch so you could use your mouse, too.

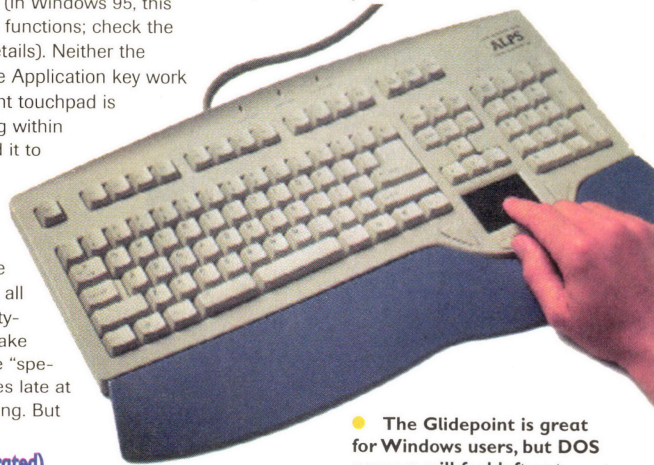
Okay, so I've covered most of the primary control problems I had with the keyboard. The keyboard itself is a 105-key setup with several remappable keys. The split spacebar at the bottom of the unit is interesting because you can use one half of it as an

alternate backspace key. The other features of this unit are more geared to the serious Windows user rather than the gamer, but you should know what you might be missing. The two Windows keys along the bottom row allow you to either call up the task manager or any Windows executable with a single press. There's also an application key that will allow you to launch an application from within Windows (in Windows 95, this key has some special functions; check the documentation for details). Neither the Windows keys nor the Application key work in DOS. The Glidepoint touchpad is well-suited to working within Windows, and I found it to be a nice departure from the mouse. The keys are soft-click, meaning they won't get your spouse or spousal equivalent all riled up at the clackety-clacking noise you make from playing on those "special" Internet chat lines late at night. Okay, just kidding. But

the feel is pretty nice.

All in all, I've got to admit that I like the functionality this board provides in Windows. But for serious DOS gaming, I'm still going to unplug the touchpad unit and plug in my good old dependable mouse. **CGR**

WB ADDRESS
<http://www.alps.com>



● The Glidepoint is great for Windows users, but DOS gamers will feel left out.

CGR Rating 35(DOS) 95(Windows 3.1) (Windows 95 - not rated)

Manufacturer: Alps Electric Phone: (408) 432-6000 Price: \$129.95

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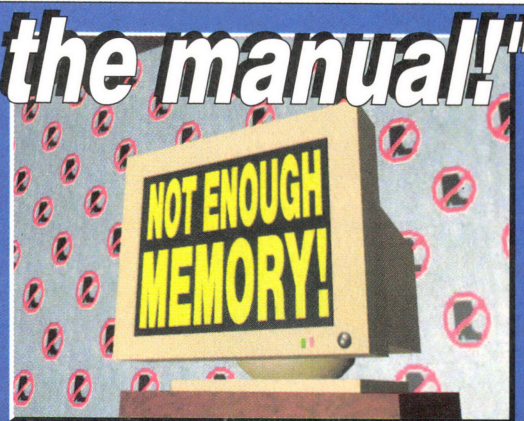
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HARDWARE

Steer Clear

Regardless of the price, here's a product that should be avoided at all costs. Though not nearly as bad as the

Demon Destroyer Gunn, a product which still causes me to shiver involuntarily whenever I so much as think about it, the Per4mer Turbo Wheel is still pretty high on my list of products to give to people I hate. But let me bottle all of this vitriol up inside for a moment so that I can tell you what the Per4mer purports to be.

The Per4mer Turbo Wheel is a driving wheel that has eight buttons, four on the wheel itself and four on the "virtual dashboard." The wheel has about a 50-degree lock-to-lock, which is a good range of movement. The base has a decent-sized footprint for stability. The unit plugs into the joystick port on your machine. So what's got my goat?

Basically, it doesn't perform up to gamers' needs. Disregarding for the moment the fact that the device stopped working after only one race in Megarace, the game that comes bundled with it, let's take a look at the design. The two thumb switches on the front of the wheel act as the Y-axis of the device. For acceleration and braking, this works out pretty well. Unfortunately, it has flush-mount buttons (corresponding to the fire buttons on a two-button joystick) on the back of the thumb-switch mounts; they are extremely uncomfortable to use, as you must overextend your fingers or rest them in an unnatural position to have quick access to them. The four buttons on the base of the device are an interesting blend of functionality

and design. The two left-hand buttons have nothing to do with any joystick I've ever seen; they're there to mimic the up and down arrow keys on your keyboard. This makes them useful for menu selection, but they otherwise do nothing. The two right-hand buttons correspond to the third and fourth fire buttons on your average four-button joystick, and are only moderately difficult to reach. The base design is also poor; it's front-heavy, and the slightest weight or pull on the wheel causes it to tip over into your lap. The rubber feet on the bottom of the base do little to counteract any slide problems you might have from pushing or pulling on the wheel.

While the joystick calibration was dead-on, the first Per4mer I tested out failed to maintain its initialization in any of the games I tried it with. Fortunately, SC&T International, the distributor, had also sent one to the folks over in EGM. Why? I don't know. What I do know is that I experienced exactly the same thing with this second unit. I rather suspect that the components aren't exactly military grade, if you follow my meaning. As a last jab, the price is way too high; I wouldn't even consider paying for a product as poorly designed and implemented as this seems to be. **CGR**

WEB ADDRESS
<http://www.platinumsound.com>

CGR Rating 10

Manufacturer: Home Arcade Systems, Inc.
Distributor: SC&T International
Phone: (602) 470-1334 Price: \$81.99

● The Per4mer does for race games what rear-end collisions do for a Pinto.



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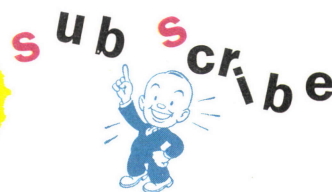
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FOUR MEGS OF VRAM WILL NOT MAKE NAVY FIGHTERS PLAY FASTER

Video Vices

If I had a dollar for every dollar that has been wasted on extra video RAM for gaming I would...have a lot of dollars.

The sad truth is that many people are under the impression that eight Megs of VRAM on their video card will make a game play faster than 1 Meg of DRAM. This is untrue in almost all cases, but it sounds like it should work. VRAM is faster, right? More RAM is better, right?

Let me begin by explaining the basic difference between DRAM and VRAM on a video card. First off, not all RAM on video cards is VRAM (VideoRAM). Many people mistake video RAM (meaning any RAM on a video card) for VRAM. This is mainly the fault of video card manufacturers. They often refer to something like "two megabytes of video RAM" on one part of their product's box, only to print "dynamic RAM" somewhere else. Sometimes they purposely don't print what type of RAM they're using, which almost always means the less expensive DRAM.

The functional difference between DRAM and VRAM is in the way that these types of memory read and write their data. DRAM must read, then write while VRAM can read and write at the same time. This is why VRAM is sometimes referred to as dual-ported VRAM. Data can be read from one port while writing to the other. The practical effect of all of this is that VRAM is much faster than DRAM.

So why won't VRAM help your game? Well, it won't help any DOS-based games. At the time of this writing there are still extremely few native-mode Windows games. Many Windows 95 games that are currently out actually just open a DOS session. Actual Windows applications can be helped by VRAM, and I'll get to that in a minute. The basic reason that VRAM won't help a DOS-based game is that DOS-based games are almost universally only 256 colors. Consequently, they don't use the memory on the video card very heavily at all. How the card's graphic co-processor runs in a DOS environment is much more important.

Here's the big secret of what memory on a video card is used for:

"Where a VRAM card can really pay off is in Windows performance."

colors. 256 colors at resolutions up to 640x480 require less than one megabyte of video memory! One megabyte of video memory can produce up to 16.7 million colors at 640x480 on some cards. However, 16.7 million colors at 1024x768 resolution requires four Megs of video RAM.

Those really expensive four Meg (and higher) VRAM cards were designed for desktop publishers, photo editing, 3-D modeling and other applications that require both high resolution and high color at the same time. Sadly, we're still a long way away from games at 1024x768 at 16.7 million colors. So is having one of these monstrously over-capable video cards a bad thing? Usually, it just means that you overpaid if you bought it mainly to play games. However, in some cases these cards were designed only with Windows and specialized 3-D software in mind, and their gaming performance is actually worse than much less expensive cards.

Where a VRAM card can really pay off is in Windows performance.

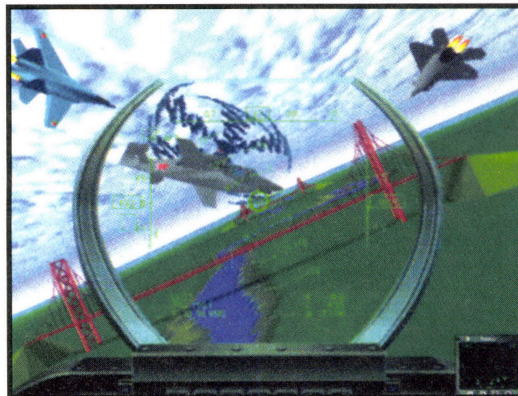
Our testing has shown roughly a 30% increase in speed in Windows performance between VRAM and standard DRAM given the same brand of video card. I say "standard" DRAM because the new EDO (Extended Data Output) DRAM is almost as fast as VRAM for many Windows applications. But beware of cards claiming to have EDO VRAM installed. At the time of this writing we haven't seen any performance increase in the supposed "EDO VRAM" above standard VRAM. At this point it may just be misleading marketing hype.

So where does all this technobabble leave you, the consumer?

When you're considering purchasing a new video board, ask yourself the following questions:

What is my primary reason for wanting this new card?

If it's to play DOS-based games, one or two Megs of DRAM or EDO DRAM is plenty. VRAM won't help here. If it's to run Windows



• Video cards can help and hinder graphic performance.

or 3-D applications, look for VRAM for greater speed.

Do I need to do true color (16.7 Million) work, or might I in the future?

If so, then decide what the maximum resolution you might want to work in is. Remember that you may want a larger monitor in the future. Just because 1600x1200 resolution would be ridiculously small on your 15" monitor doesn't mean you should deny yourself the capability if you decide to win the lottery and buy that nice 37" monitor you've had your eye on.

How much video RAM do I need to support the resolution I want in true color?

This varies slightly according to the card manufacturer, but the basic rules are these:

640x480 @ 16.7M - 1 Meg
800x600 @ 16.7M - 2 Megs
1024x768 @ 16.7M - 4 Megs
1280x1024 @ 16.7M - 4 Megs (only certain manufacturers have this capability)
1600x1200 @ 16.7M - 8 Megs

The most important thing to remember is not to limit yourself. If you think at some point you may need four Megs of VRAM, go for it. It'll be more expensive to change your card later if you don't get enough capability. Now that you know what the different types and amounts of video memory will do for you, you can avoid paying for memory that won't help your game.

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Computer

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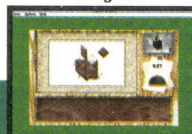
● Defcon 5



Title	Developer	Distributor	Phone #	Originality	Playability	Visuals	Audio	Manual	Overall Score
Arcade America April 1996 Issue	7th Level	7th Level	(212) 437-4858	●	●	●	●	●	75
Saturday-morning cartoon arcade-action from 7th Level. Help Joey find his pet monsters and make it in time for a rockin' concert at Woodstock.									
Cybermage March 1996 Issue	D.W. Bradley	Origin	(512) 434-4263	●	●	●	●	●	64
Battle evil corporate conglomerates in the far future in this first-person perspective, 3-D DOOM-style action-adventure game.									
Cyberspeed April 1996 Issue	Mindscape	Mindscape	(415) 897-9900	●	●	●	●	●	47
Take to the cockpit of your futuristic rocket sled and compete for first place against a variety of other pilots in this fast-paced racing game.									
Defcon 5 April 1996 Issue	Nova Spring	Vic Tokai, Inc.	(310) 326-8880	●	●	●	●	●	49
As a cyberner working for the Tyron Corporation, you'll have to escape an abandoned space station before alien Berserkers invade it.									
Earthworm Jim March 1996 Issue	Kinesoft	Activision	(310) 473-9200	●	●	●	●	●	78
Transformed by a super-cyberspace suit, Earthworm Jim must rescue the lovely Princess and defeat the ominous Queen Slug-for-a-Butt.									
Extreme Games April 1996 Issue	Sony Interactive	Sony Interactive	(415) 655-8000	●	●	●	●	●	83
Grab a set of wheels and head down the road at top speed in this ultimate test of physical endurance.									
Locus April 1996 Issue	Zombie	GT Interactive	(212) 951-3059	●	●	●	●	●	40
Take-on up to 8 other players in this futuristic arean-based, goal-scoring game of the future.									
Rayman March 1996 Issue	UbiSoft	UbiSoft	(415) 332-8749	●	●	●	●	●	81
Rescue the Great Protoon from the evil Mr. Dark and restore peace to the wonderful world of Rayman.									
Road Warrior April 1996 Issue	GameTek	GameTek	(305) 935-3995	●	●	●	●	●	40
Hop into a modified taxi cab and enter into a futuristic smash'em up derby where you get points for the number of casualties you inflict.									
Shockwave Assault April 1996 Issue	Paradox Dev.	Electronic Arts	(415) 571-7171	○	●	●	●	●	72
As the last hope for mankind, you must save the Earth from a race of hostile aliens in this action-packed arcade shooter.									
Super Street Fighter II April 1996 Issue	Capcom	Capcom	(408) 774-0500	●	●	●	●	●	50
Challenge 16 different street-fighters to some serious hand-to-hand combat, then work your way up through the ranks to take the title.									
Tempest 2000 March 1996 Issue	Atari	Atari	(408) 745-2000	●	●	●	●	●	77
Put your reflex skills to the ultimate test with this age-old arcade favorite from Atari.									
Terminator Future Shock March 1996 Issue	Bethesda Softworks	Bethesda Softworks	(301) 926-8300	●	●	●	●	●	58
As a soldier in the resistance lead by John Conner, it is your job to help destroy the forces of SkyNet in this futuristic, sci-fi shooter.									

● = Excellent ● = Good ● = Average ● = Poor ○ = Bad

● Tang Chi



● TriTryst



● The Real Deal



Puzzle

Title	Developer	Distributor	Phone #	Originality	Playability	Visuals	Audio	Manual	Overall Score
Card Players Paradise March 1996 Issue	American Laser Games	American Laser Games	(505) 880-1718	●	●	●	●	●	73
Play some of your favorite card games against some of the world's best card players. Games include Rummy 500, Pinochle, Bezique and more!									
Commodore 64 Pack April 1996 Issue	Activision	Activision	(310) 473-9200	●	●	●	●	●	53
Reminisce with some of your old-time favorites from the Commodore 64 days in this compilation for Windows '95.									
Island Casino March 1996 Issue	GT Interactive	GT Interactive	(212) 726-6500	●	●	●	●	●	81
Travel to the luxurious El San Juan Hotel and Casino and place your bets with any of Island Casino's 25 different casino games.									
The Real Deal March 1996 Issue	Mindscape	Mindscape	(415) 897-9900	●	●	●	●	●	83
Deal yourself in with 10 classic card games including Whist, Hearts, Spades, Euchre, Oh Hell, Pinochle, Cribbage, Crazy-Eights and Auction Pitch.									
Tang Chi March 1996 Issue	Capcom	Capcom	(408) 774-0500	●	●	●	●	●	64
Challenge your visual puzzle-solving skills with the ancient Chinese puzzle game known as Tang Chi.									
TriTryst March 1996 Issue	Virgin Interactive	Virgin Interactive	(714) 833-8710	●	●	●	●	●	86
Become hopelessly addicted to the mind-boggling game of TriTryst by arranging blocks within customizable game boards.									

Game Review™

● = Excellent ● = Good ○ = Average ○ = Poor ○ = Bad

Adventure-RPG

● Ripper



● The Beast Within



● Chronomaster



Title	Developer	Distributor	Phone #	Originality	Playability	Visuals	Audio	Manual	Overall Score
Angel Devoid April 1996 Issue	Electronic Dreams	Mindscape	(415) 897-9900	●	●	●	●	●	79
Masked by the identity of a wanted killer, you must evade the authorities, find the real Angel Devoid and prove your innocence in this action thriller.									
The Beast Within March 1996 Issue	Sierra	Sierra	(206) 649-9800	●	●	●	●	●	94
Gabriel Knight returns in The Beast Within, a spine-tingling mystery in which you must confront the horror of a werewolf in Munich, Germany.									
Chronomaster March 1996 Issue	DreamForge	Capstone	(305) 373-7700	●	●	●	●	●	88
Take a ride into the future in this sci-fi adventure game created by Roger Zelazny and Jane Lindskold.									
Ripper April 1996 Issue	Take 2 Interactive	Take 2 Interactive	(800) 728-2532	●	●	●	●	NA	92
Track the trail of a historical killer who has made his way into the 20th century in this terrifying 3-D adventure game.									
S.W.A.T. March 1996 Issue	Sierra	Sierra	(206) 649-9800	●	○	●	●	●	68
Join the LAPD SWAT force and rid the city of crime and corruption in this informative, yet adventure-like, police simulation game.									
Touche' April 1996 Issue	U.S. Gold	U.S. Gold	(415) 693-0297	●	●	●	●	●	80
Assume the role of Geoffri Le Brun, a young officer with the Royal Musketeers, as he begins his adventure of mystery, fun and romance.									

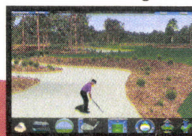
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Sports

● PBA Bowling



● Ultimate Challenge Golf



● IndyCar Racing II



Title	Developer	Distributor	Phone #	Originality	Playability	Visuals	Audio	Manual	Overall Score
IndyCar Racing II March 1996 Issue	Papyrus	Virgin Interactive	(714) 833-8710	○	●	●	●	●	94
Get behind the wheel of a high-powered Indy race car and put your driving skills to the ultimate test of high-speed racing.									
PBA Bowling March 1996 Issue	Bethesda Softworks	Bethesda Softworks	(301) 926-8300	○	○	●	●	●	71
Grab your bowling shoes and head out for the lanes with PBA Bowling where your 300 game is now only a few mouse clicks away.									
Pool Champion March 1996 Issue	Bitmasters	Mindscape	(415) 897-9900	●	●	●	●	●	89
Live the life of a pool shark in this graphically realistic pool simulation game that allows you to pick your opponent and win a few bucks.									
UR '96 March 1996 Issue	Sport Accolade	Sport Accolade	(408) 985-1700	○	●	●	●	●	77
This next-generation football simulation game provides you with the statistics of over 700 NFL players, superior graphics and improved AI.									
Ultimate Challenge Golf March 1996 Issue	Friendly Software	Grollier	(203) 797-3530	○	●	●	●	●	64
Join PGA professional Greg Norman in his own golf simulation game set on the Medalist Golf Course.									
Wayne Gretzky March 1996 Issue	Time Warner	Time Warner	(408) 434-3700	○	○	●	●	●	51
Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA All-Stars make their way onto your PC for some serious stick-slapping, board-banging action.									

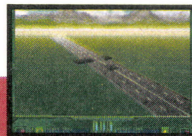
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Strategy-War

● Battleground: Gettysburg



● Battle Isle 2220



● Allied General



Title	Developer	Distributor	Phone #	Originality	Playability	Visuals	Audio	Manual	Overall Score
Allied General March 1996 Issue	SSI	Mindscape	(415) 897-9900	○	●	●	●	●	91
Take control of your armies as general of either the Allied or Axis powers in this WWII strategy war game.									
Battle Isle 2220 April 1996 Issue	Blue Byte	Blue Byte	(708) 539-7950	○	●	●	●	NA	81
Help Caro rebuild the Empire from the ashes of Drullian treachery in the the distant future.									
Battleground: Gettysburg March 1996 Issue	TalonSoft	Empire Interactive	(301) 916-9302	●	●	●	●	●	82
Relive the three most bloody days of the Civil War during a crucial turning point of American History									
Warhammer March 1996 Issue	Mindscape	Mindscape	(415) 897-9900	●	●	●	●	●	80
In this Warhammer sequel, the Shadow of the Horned Rat, you will be given the opportunity to become the most powerful mercenary of the land.									

CONFESSIONS OF A DEATHMATCH JUNKIE

Duke Nukem3D Anyone?

Even though DOOM is considered to be the most successful game ever created for the PC, few have experienced the other side of this game known as DeathMatch®.

Usually played with no monsters against one other person over a modem/serial connection, or against three other persons via an IPX network, DeathMatch is the ultimate test of nerves, marksmanship and outright luck.

Over the years, DOOM clones have made their way into the market supporting multiple-person gameplay in an effort to attract dedicated DeathMatch players such as myself. Ever since my first DeathMatch experience with the original DOOM back in 1993, I've been hopelessly addicted. When DOOM II came out in 1994, the introduction of the Super Shotgun was immediately deemed an improvement and accepted as the weapon of choice. The Super Shotgun was incredibly lethal and would take down a player in one shot at close range. The only drawback was that it suffered from an increased reload time, so if you missed your opponent with the first shot, they would have more than enough time to get their bead on you and return fire before you could get off another round. With its minor improvements over the original, it seemed at the time that DOOM II was going to be the hottest game for a long while to come.

Heretic was the next game to make its way onto our hard drives, offering more diversity in terms of gameplay than anything else at the time. Set in a medieval-fantasy world, it gave you a variety of spells and unusual weapons. Plus, you could collect

"Duke Nukem3D has added several useful toys and many features that enhance the DeathMatch experience."

different power-ups and use them whenever you wanted instead of having to use them right when you picked them up, as was the case in both DOOM and DOOM II. Heretic also introduced the ability to fly above your opponents and attack them from the air. The Egg Ovum was another improvement to multiplayer gameplay, which when used properly, would turn your opponent into a chicken for a moment of extreme humiliation and a quick kill. What more could a DeathMatch junkie ask for?

360-degrees of freedom in movement soon followed with Descent, and let me tell you from experience that this is by far the most challenging game to play in multiplayer mode. Set in space, deep within the dark mining tunnels of planets and moons, you piloted a versatile spaceship in 3-D, first-person perspective. Descent offered a wide variety of weapons to obliterate your opponents, but I found myself concentrating more on navigating my ship rather than accumulating kills. An incredible game, nonetheless, but multiplayer mode takes an incredible amount of skill to survive. So my friends and I soon found ourselves back playing DOOM II and Heretic.

Apogee and id, having previously created the entire genre with Blake Stone and Wolfenstein 3-D, respectively, many years before DOOM, responded to the onset of popular DOOM clones with Rise of the Triad which featured more weapons, characters, blood and gore, and it was the first DOOM clone to support network play for up to 16 players. The only problem with RotT was that there was just

too much stuff for any experienced DeathMatch player to deal with. Here you had fire-and-forget weapons of incredible destruction that required absolutely no skill to use. Our "frag" count went up, but our overall appreciation for this game went down since just about anyone could kill you. Back to DOOM II and Heretic we went...

In the fall of last year, the sequel to Heretic, Hexen, was released and looked to be the cruelest DOOM clone yet—and it was. Not only was it incredibly difficult to play against the stupid monsters in single player mode, but equally as difficult to score a "frag" in multiplayer mode. This was the one major problem with playing Hexen in DeathMatch; because Hexen depended so heavily on close-quarters combat (only the more powerful weapons were long-range, whereas the default weapons, with the exception of the Mage, were all close range), you spent most of your time chasing your opponents around trying to get up close to them so you could hit them with your gauntlets or stick. And often was the case that whoever picked up a ranged weapon first would determine the outcome of the game.



● Consider yourself lucky if you get this close to Duke.

Cruel? Yes. Entertaining? Not exactly. DOOM II anyone?

So here I was, believing that it was going to take the second coming of Christ to convince me that anything could top DeathMatch with DOOM II when Duke Nukem3D made its way into my hands. I have just three words for anyone who loves DOOM clones and DeathMatch; BUY THIS GAME!!! As an experienced DeathMatch player, I can hardly express just how impressed I am by it. Let's put the outstanding graphics and sound aside for a moment and just talk about playability in multiplayer mode. Duke Nukem3D has added several useful toys and many features that enhance the entire "DeathMatch" experience. The "Holo-Duke" allows you to project an authentic image of yourself, which you can manipulate to fool other players into believing you're somewhere you're not. The strategic possibilities using this feature are unlimited. One of the many weapons included with the Shareware version of this game is the Pipe Bomb, which you can throw and detonate at will. Consider this situation; your opponent is waiting for you at the bottom of an elevator shaft and you want to kill him first...why not project an image of yourself onto the elevator and send a Pipe Bomb down with it? BOOM! Instant "frag." You can also jump and even duck in Duke Nukem3D to evade fire, and if you take the Steroids, you'll find yourself blazing across your opponent's computer screen like the "Flash." The only catch with all of this fluff is that you'll definitely want to upgrade to a Pentium so you can take advantage of Duke Nukem3D's high-resolution graphics, but you were planning on doing this anyway, right? Apogee has opened up new doors for DeathMatch play, and I must now regretfully admit that DOOM II has finally been bumped from the top spot. Duke Nukem3D anyone?

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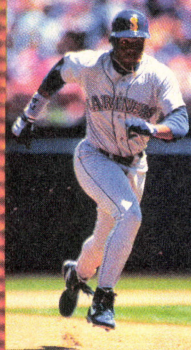
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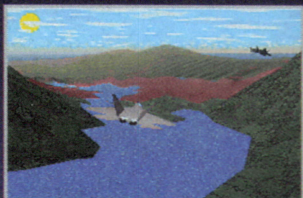
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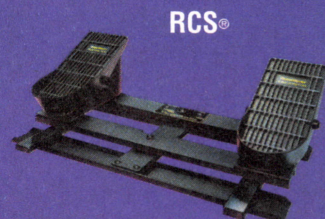
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on Tue Mar 12 10:04:27 1996
To: James
From: Web Slinger 88
Subject: Hey there!

Chris has just sent the chat
Plan. Chris has just sent the chat
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Hey there!
Hey there!
Hey there!

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After a seemingly endless and painful wait, ID has finally released a beta version of the Quake engine to the public! Challenge your friends and enemies to a Deathmatch in the new and breathtaking beta made the technology of the future in DOOM II. Prepare to be awed by this fantastic looking release!

INTERVIEW

James Burke

James Burke, host known for his television show Connections, in which he traces the chain reaction that occurs from one invention to another. In this exclusive interview, he explains why he took his famed concept and brought it to the PC.

SPECIAL FEATURE

INTERARC
the Internet Arcade

InterARC Internet Arcade

Check out the TWEVE and a preview of Rocket Science Online online arcade, InterARC!

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CRITICAL REACTION:

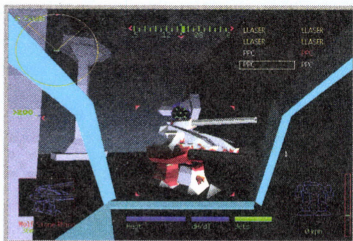
The final Assault on Clan Wolf

MISSION: Destroy Orbital Platform

Since the final mission in Ghost Bear's Legacy is in space, you'll need a Mech that can be outfitted with jump jets. Your assignment is to jump from your mothership into the small hole in the Wolf ship that has been made for you, destroy all the mechs onboard and only then knock out the on-board reactor and return to the mothership.

Don't be too finicky about which Mech you take, as you will only need a couple of jump jets for even the heaviest Mech. Since the missions in GBL are designed so that you have the same Mech for several missions in a row, you might be heading into this one with any of the heavier Mechs. A Grizzly or an Executioner will do nicely as they both have jump capacity yet are heavy enough to take the punishment you will encounter when you emerge from the ship.

Outfit your Mech with a pair of heavy lasers (large Pulse lasers work nicely) to knock out the opposing Mechs. Next, load up your Mech with some missiles. A couple of SRM-2's



This Rhino has a taste for the blood of a Ghost Bear Warrior and he's determined to protect the Wolf reactor from harm.

should be enough—as you will only need them for the turrets. Missiles will be used for their explosive payload and for their range as some of the turrets are a long ways off when you start the mission. Also—if you have the room—a Phased Plasma Cannon might not be a bad idea for taking out targets quickly—just don't

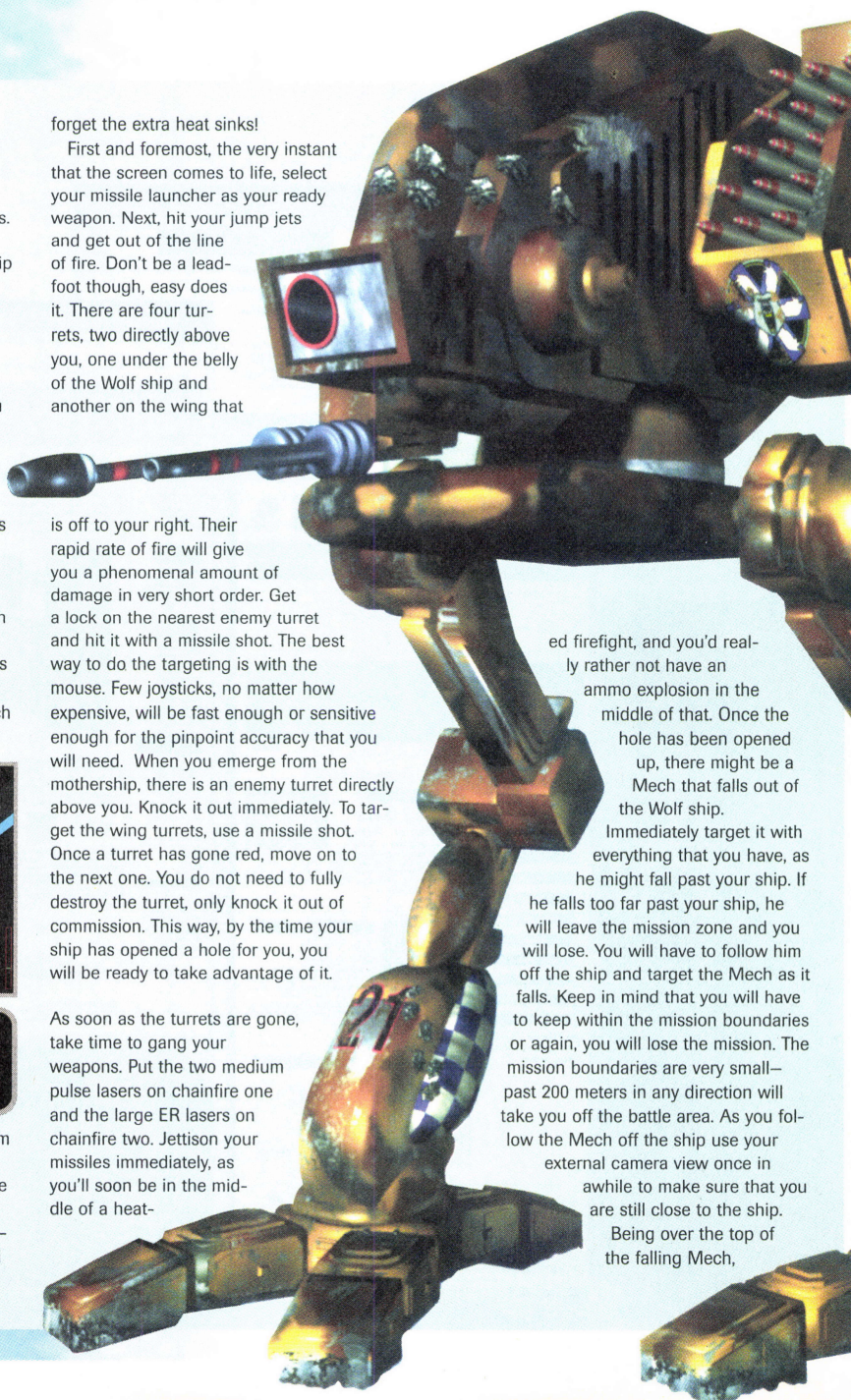
forget the extra heat sinks!

First and foremost, the very instant that the screen comes to life, select your missile launcher as your ready weapon. Next, hit your jump jets and get out of the line of fire. Don't be a lead-foot though, easy does it. There are four turrets, two directly above you, one under the belly of the Wolf ship and another on the wing that

is off to your right. Their rapid rate of fire will give you a phenomenal amount of damage in very short order. Get a lock on the nearest enemy turret and hit it with a missile shot. The best way to do the targeting is with the mouse. Few joysticks, no matter how expensive, will be fast enough or sensitive enough for the pinpoint accuracy that you will need. When you emerge from the mothership, there is an enemy turret directly above you. Knock it out immediately. To target the wing turrets, use a missile shot. Once a turret has gone red, move on to the next one. You do not need to fully destroy the turret, only knock it out of commission. This way, by the time your ship has opened a hole for you, you will be ready to take advantage of it.

As soon as the turrets are gone, take time to gang your weapons. Put the two medium pulse lasers on chainfire one and the large ER lasers on chainfire two. Jettison your missiles immediately, as you'll soon be in the middle of a heat-

ed firefight, and you'd really rather not have an ammo explosion in the middle of that. Once the hole has been opened up, there might be a Mech that falls out of the Wolf ship. Immediately target it with everything that you have, as he might fall past your ship. If he falls too far past your ship, he will leave the mission zone and you will lose. You will have to follow him off the ship and target the Mech as it falls. Keep in mind that you will have to keep within the mission boundaries or again, you will lose the mission. The mission boundaries are very small—past 200 meters in any direction will take you off the battle area. As you follow the Mech off the ship use your external camera view once in awhile to make sure that you are still close to the ship. Being over the top of the falling Mech,



you will now be able to target the head effectively. Hit it with everything in your arsenal; don't worry too much about overheating—because in the space missions heat tends to dissipate more than when planetside. Once you have destroyed the falling Mech, get back on the ship to replenish your jump juice. An important thing to remember when you are in combat on a spaceship is that when you turn, do it gently. Remember your physics lessons about force and motion? If you hit the jets in any direction, you will tend to continue to move in that direction until something counteracts the initial force. While this is not perpetual motion like it would really be in space, it does have an effect on your maneuverability. Also if you turn in a Mech, you will move forward at the same time—and when you move forward in space, there isn't much to slow you

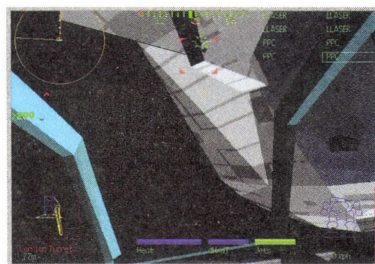
the armor. This is a good time to take a look at what's waiting for you inside. As you maneuver your Mech toward the hole, you will need to go up through it. The fit is tight but you will have room to get into the ship. Make sure that you enter the ship facing the Wolf ship's starboard side, in other words, the side that was to your right when you started the mission. The entrance to the interior of the ship is going to have at least two Mechs—a Marauder IIC and an Executioner. There are also a Stone Rhino, a Gargoyle and a few Executioners onboard, so be prepared for a real gunfight. The best way to take down a Rhino is to take out its legs. Being a chicken-legged Mech, it will have weaker than normal maneuvering abilities, and you can use this to your advantage by getting in behind it. These tactics work well on all enemy Mechs, but the

“...JUST A FEW HIGH-SPEED FACEPLANTS INTO THE WALLS CAN SCREW UP YOUR WHOLE DAY...”

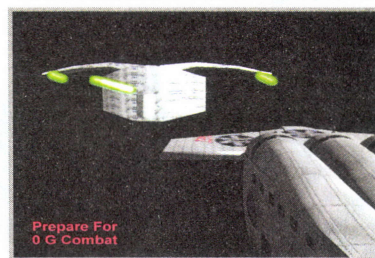
down and you'll end up running off the ship.

Once the hole has been opened for you, you can enter the Wolf ship. This takes a lot of practice and unless you are a brilliant jump jetter, you will need to work at it a few times. Be patient and try, try again. This is just about the toughest MechWarrior mission designed so far. When you get up close to the Wolf ship's hull, you will be able to target the 'Mechs through

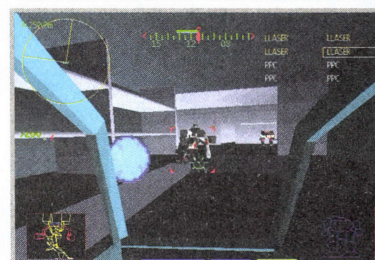
Stone Rhino is easily the scariest of the bunch. One thing to remember once you are onboard the ship is that you will be knocked around by every hit that you take. Stone Rhinos especially like to hit targets with their cannon assemblies so be ready to get knocked on your butt a few times. It can become very disorienting so be prepared to regain focus on your target as quickly as you can. A tactic Ted likes to use on this mission is to perform it solely with jump jets. As he explains it, hovering a couple feet off the deck and strafing the competition is a heck of a lot easier than trying to run and turn in a zero-G environment. The open area at the entrance



Target the belly turrets first, they are the closest and the most dangerous.



Some of the Mechs that you'll face are the TimberWolf, Linebacker, Executioner and lots of Stone Rhinos.



Some of the Mechs that you'll face are the TimberWolf, Linebacker, Executioner and lots of Stone Rhinos.

The Joy of Mechs



Horned Owl

The smallest Mech with room for both jump jets and weapons. A very small target for enemy guns, though, and you'll be right at your enemies' leg height



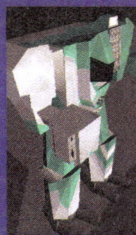
Nova

For the truly skilled Mech pilot. It is well-armored and low-slung, but its poor turret control makes the Nova reliant on its pilot's jump jet control.



Rifleman

A good choice for this mission, as it has decent armor and decent weapons capacity. Its one downside is its turning ability, which is decidedly poor.



Grizzly

The best choice for the mission. Not only does it have good payload capacity, it can also turn on a dime. Excellent armor capacity helps make it a winner.



Summoner

This is a good choice for the novice pilot. The Summoner has decent control and excellent payload capacity. It has few serious shortcomings.



Executioner

The largest Mech you'll want to take. Other, larger BattleMechs simply make too large and slow a target for enemy guns, despite their power.

to the ship is the best place to practice this DOOM-style strafing maneuver, hovering on jump jets while targeting with the mouse. It's totally evil if you do it right, and totally damaging if you screw it up (just a few high-speed faceplants into the walls can screw up your whole day...).

After defeating the Mechs at the entrance you can proceed to the reactor room. Upon entering the antechamber to the reactor room, make sure that you select your targeting radar to pick up the next nearest enemy. It will be a Gargoyle that is hiding around the first corner on your left as you head toward the reactor. You can fight around the room keeping a wall in between both of you until

you take him down. Then, as you move into the reactor room, you will see the reactor's right side contact point first. Hit it twice with your medium lasers. This will trigger the Rhino inside the reactor room to come after you, but will not destroy the reactor core. This way, you will not have to enter the reactor room proper in order to bring out the Rhino as the game is programmed to do. The most effective way to take this Rhino out is to shoot at him from around the corner and from a distance down the hallway.

Remember: Target its legs; they are very weak when compared to the rest of its armor. If you are really brave and want to have some fun with the Rhino, enter the reactor room proper

TOP SECRET MECHWARRIOR II ACCESS/SUPPORT CODES

When you play MechWarrior II and Ghost Bear's Legacy, you may find yourself in some deep trouble some time, and even the strategies won't help. Here are some words of wisdom to help you out of your dilemma.

First of all, press **Ctrl.—Alt.—Shift** while typing:

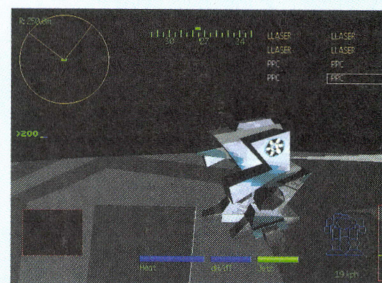
blorb: Total invulnerability. Even your mother won't yell at you anymore.
flygirl: Adds jump jets to any Mech. Yes, any.
enolagay: Nuclear Holocaust. See above first.
xray: See things you can't normally.
mightymouse: Infinite jump juice.
icanthackit: Completes current mission.
dorcs: Meet your makers.

You can also go into the trials of Grievance and name your MechWarrior Enzo(case sensitive) to try out the Battlemaster, Tarantula or even the Elemental.

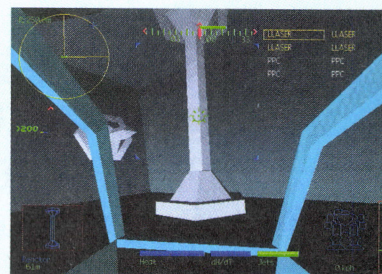
Another fun trick is to click on the numbers in the Clan Wolf Holo-screen and see what happens...

Ghost Bear's Legacy:

Once again, **Ctrl.—Alt.—Shift** and:
putz: Completes the mission.
kaboom: Just like Hiroshima.
kent: Invulnerability.
clark: X-ray vision.
feffi: Try it and see...



Nav point Alpha is a clear white line across the front of the Ghost Bear Mothership. If you can't find it from the cockpit, use the external camera view.



The reactor does not have a lot of armor, and it will fall after a few laser salvos. Just be ready to run.

and chase him around the core. He won't be able to shoot at you without hitting the core and if he does, much less work for you.

Targeting the reactor core is simple, hit the identification button and you will see the reactor come up in the blue targeting scope. After you have knocked it out, you will have a very short time to get off the ship before it blows—approximately 30 seconds. If you're onboard when things heat up, you can kiss that nice little Clan pension of yours goodbye. Once you leave the ship, get back on the mothership and land. Now you need to get your metal carcass to Nav Point Alpha to win. Nav Alpha is rather clearly marked at the front of the Ghost Bear mothership by a thin line that runs across the roof of the cockpit. It is a tiny little area that is only slightly different in color than the rest of the top of your ship. Since it's the elevator, you need to be right on top of it to win the mission. This is some precision piloting, folks; close doesn't count.

When you survive the mission on the easy setting, go back and try it on the hardest. If that isn't enough of a challenge for you, take a smaller Mech into combat and handicap yourself by taking fewer weapons, less armor, etc. If you can survive the mission in a Mech as small as a Rifleman with half armor and a few weapons, you are an excellent choice for Khan. Hope you enjoyed it!

Long live Clan Ghost Bear. **CGR**

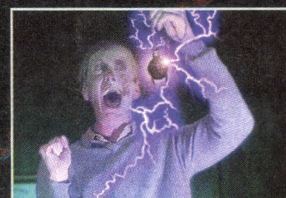
—Scott Gehrs

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As an American student in France, you take on the identity of William Tibbs and your objective is to travel back to 14th century France to rescue your fiancée, Juliette, who has been kidnapped by evil knights. We don't know how or why she has been kidnapped, but she has.

Although this game is relatively easy to solve, some of the sequences can be real stumbers. For the most part, your stamina is the biggest problem you face if you are not a quick and efficient fighter (even on the easy level).

I have been chosen as your faithful sage. I will aid you through the perils to come on this long and tumultuous journey and help you uncover mysteries of the past decipher the secret language of the "Knight's Templar." All information and instruction I offer will be according to Tibbs' perspective.

Just remember, you take all the fun out of it by peeking at this when you *really* don't need to.

1. ENTRANCE

You begin at the entrance of the museum. Go inside the room to your right. Take the headphones on the case to your left. Leave this room and enter the room directly across the hall. You will need to arm yourself. Find a sword and shield. It is hidden in an obvious place—by one of the suits of armor. Before you leave this room, walk to the large painting at the front of the room and look at it. You will learn of your heritage.

2. TICKET OFFICE

Now you may travel through the door on your right. You are now in the ticket office. You need to do several things here. The ticket desk in the center of the room holds items of great benefit to you. Walk around the ticket desk. Keep examining the counter as you move around. In this area you will find a catapult and a compact disc. Take them both. Towards the back of the room on the left, I can see some kind of terminal with a screen. Walk to the right side of it and examine the wall. Find the cord attached to the terminal and plug it in. Use your CD on this terminal, it will provide you with invaluable information. Now you are able to enter through the wooden door across from the ticket counter.

3. CURATOR'S OFFICE

You are in the curator's office. It seems that the evil Wolfram has been observing your moves. It is of utmost importance that your actions now are precise. There are several items in this room you must add to your inventory. The desk holds the



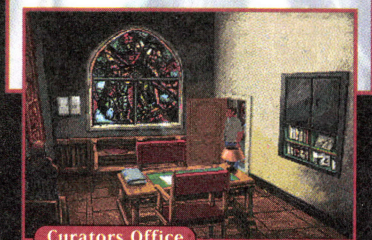
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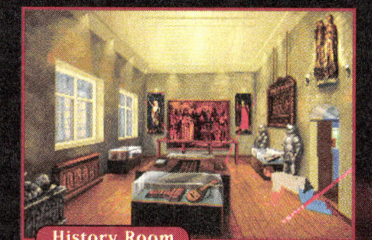
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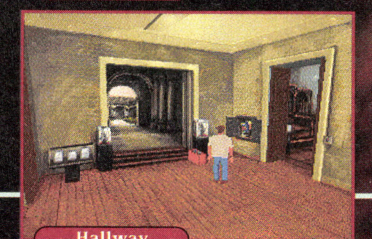
Back in Time



Curators Office



History Room



Hallway

objects you will need. Stand behind the desk and open the drawers on the right and left sides. You should find a newspaper, key and a magnetic card. Read the newspaper. It will give you an important clue for future use. You will also learn that there is no further information on the whereabouts of your beloved Juliette. Exit this room slowly.

4. HISTORY ROOM

You find yourself on your knees. You must avoid the alarm laser beams. Now is a good time to save the game. To avoid the beams, stay close to the display cases in the center of the room. First, move straight ahead to the center case. Now hug the case and follow it around towards the large painting at the front of the room. Keep hugging the case as you crawl around it. Once you have reached the opposite side of the case by the windows, start to move toward the wall next to what looks like a tomb. Now hug the tomb and follow it till you reach the wall next to the hallway door. When you reach the door, crawl to the left and exit. This one is a piece of cake Tibbs, compared to those that follow. The practice did you good.

5. THE HALLWAY

Now in the hallway again, find the area where you saw the workmen and examine the tool box they left on the floor. Take the screwdriver. Use the screwdriver on the locked door next to the control box on the wall.

THROUGH THE PORTALS OF TI

6. TOURIST ROOM

Enter and pass through the ropes to your right. Walk to the back of the room and go to the left corner. You will find a fire extinguisher filled with foam. In the right corner there is a water-filled fire extinguisher. You can pick this one up, however, you will not need it for the easy level. Leave this room. Go back into the hall and stand in front of the control box. Use the key to open the box. From the newspaper article, you know to use the foam fire extinguisher on the box. This will disarm the alarm system and you can move freely into the next room. Beware. Trouble looms ahead.

Tibbs, it would be wise for you to protect yourself here. Use your sword and shield before you venture ahead. I advise you to save your game here. Now you may go up the steps that were previously blocked by the workmen. Wolfram will taunt you with an encounter with a black knight. Be surefooted here, one false move will trigger the alarm system. Now that you have defeated the black knight, examine the display cases. You will find one that contains ammunition. Use the magnetic card to open the case and take the catapult ammunition. The other display case contains nothing you need for this journey.



Tourist Room



Black Knight Fight



Down the Well

7. ARTIFACT ROOM

This next room will wear thin on your nerves. You will need expert hand-eye coordination to complete this killer maze. Do not move into the next room any farther than the doorway—the room is filled with alarm beams. Before you venture in, you must prepare. Use the catapult you found in the ticket room here. It will appear next to you on the floor. It

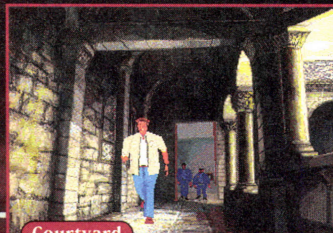
would again be wise to save your game here. If done cor-



Artifact Room



Beam Maze



Courtyard

rectly, the catapult will disarm the beams so you may enter the room freely. The best advice I can give you is to survey the beam patterns carefully. Notice where the beams originate and where they fall on the floor. This will help you determine the height of the beams in relation to the catapult's location. Drive the catapult into the room slowly! As soon as you get a good view of the situation, you will see what you are up against. Steer your catapult to the right (if you go to the left, it is hopeless) and hug the glass case until you get an overview of the room. This will show you the best path to take and you will see the red button on the far wall to deactivate the beams.

Tibbs, this maze can be completed only through trial and error. Hug the case until you see an open path that will lead you toward the center of the room and one that will put you in line for a clear shot to the red button. You will know you have made it when you see a message prompting you to fire the catapult. Go into your inventory and use the ammunition, then go back into the inventory, find the catapult and press the "throw" icon below it. Remember, as you progress through the maze, keep saving your game! You have now successfully deactivated the alarm system. Go into inventory and click on the catapult, now you can continue. You won't need the catapult again, so you can leave it there. There is a sword on the right wall of this room, take it.

8. COURTYARD

It is time to explore the courtyard outside. Once more Tibbs, save the journey, for trouble again lurks about the courtyard. You must protect yourself. Before you enter the courtyard, arm yourself. You are suddenly confronted with another black knight. Defeat this foe, but remain far from the beams. With this knight dead, enter the walkway close to the museum and follow it around. If you are close to the point at which you entered, look to both sides of the doorway and find the hologram. Take it. Now, continue to follow the walkway around the museum. You will reach a certain point, and two men will emerge from a door and chase you. Do not panic. You will need to let the men catch you. If they do not, wander the courtyard until you find these men. They will send you on the next part of your journey back into time by throwing you down the well.

9. PRISON CELLS - 1329

You have now travelled back to the year 1329. It is in this point in time that Juliette is held captive. Look around your cell and find the lute. Use the lute and throw it to the prisoner across from you.

Position yourself in the middle of the cell to do this. When the other prisoner starts to play it, a guard will come in and stand in front of your cell. This is a perfect

opportunity to knock him off his feet. As the guard stands in front of you, kick him. He will fall forward and allow the other prisoner to escape by taking his keys. The released prisoner will now throw you the keys, allowing your escape. Take the keys and open your cell. Take the sword the guard left in front of your cell. You will have to battle another guard. When you have killed him, take the keys he leaves behind. Save your game. As you go down the hall, look for the locked gate. Make sure you are still armed with your sword. Fight the guard that attacks you. The down arrow key provides the fastest blow. Move from the corner, this may help. This guard has a cross-bow and is quick. He is not easily defeated. Positioning yourself correctly will help in a quicker kill. Move around. After your battle, go inside the open room. Take the bottle of wine and drink it. It will build up your strength.

Unlock the gate and go up the stairs. Once at the top, do not move. Wait till you hear footsteps and you will see a blind man walking toward you. Just stand there until he passes. Do not pull on the rope that is hanging from the ceiling. It will ring and call attention to your presence and you will be killed. If you dare, you may peek inside the door on your right that the blind man entered, but don't go in. You will see what Wolfram is up to. The fireplace holds another object that you will need. Examine it. There you will find a key. This key is used to open the locked door next to the fireplace. I must warn you of present danger. Save your game.

10. SHEEP ROOM

You will need to enter this next room **RUNNING**. I have not found an easier way to maneuver through this room. It will take a few tries Tibbs, but you must practice to get your angles right. There is a sheep inside that will butt you as soon as you enter and you will be killed. There are two areas you will need to explore to find the things you will need next. Unless you possess x-ray vision, you will need to allow yourself to be killed once or twice to get an idea of where you need to go once you enter the room, so, again, I warn you to save your journey. Try to make your way to the room on the right of the door first. In this room examine all the shelves. Take the bottle, bucket and ham leg. If you made it this far past the sheep, save your game.

Leave this room running and go to your right to the area in back of the sheep. Here you will find a shepherd's crook, sheep skin and a barrel of water. Fill the bucket with water. You will need to put the bucket of water in your inventory before you leave this area. Save your game. Leave this area



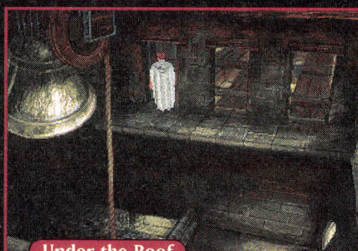
Prison Cells



Wolfram & Blind Man up to no Good



Sheep Room



Under the Roof



Evil Wolfram

running and go back into the main hallway and back to the fireplace. Enjoy the ham and wine or if your strength is at full force, save it for later. Use the bucket of water on the fireplace. Search the fireplace. You have now found a passage up the chimney to a landing under the roof.

11. UNDER THE ROOF

You may tire of my constant badgering to save your journey, but you have travelled far and hard and your courage has been great. It would mean Juliette's life and be a great loss, if your crusade ended this soon. With sure-footing, center yourself so you are right in front of the bell. Use the sheep skin. This will trigger you to also use the shepherd's crook on the bell and you will swing to the other side on the rope silently. Save your game. Enter the left opening and carefully walk on the ceiling beam. Avoid the owl—he will alert others to your presence. Turn left again. You will be above Wolfram's bedroom. He is sleeping and should not be disturbed. Continue on and turn to your right. You should now see another man sleeping. Stay on the beam closest to the doorway from which you just entered. The sleeping man should be on your right. You will see a cloak on the wall. Use the shepherd's crook to take it. Continue straight and when you enter the next room turn to your right and follow the beam toward the wall. It is now safe to jump.

12. GROUND FLOOR

The large iron cage in front of you holds the answers to many secrets. Open the cage and search it. Take the book inside, "The Knight's Song," and take the hologram. Read the book. It holds a wealth of knowledge. You will see a large golden cross in this room. It is no time to pray, you must rescue Juliette. Push the golden cross.

13. THE SCRIPTORIUM

You will need to copy the contents of the "Knight's Song" and return it safely to the cage before it is missed. On the table to the right, take the water, pitch, boneblack and spleen. Proceed to the front of the room and go up the steps. Examine the cupboard and the desk. Take the wooden box and the quill. Go back down the stairs to the desks along the left side of the room. Go to the first one and read the inscription on the white cloth. It is the recipe to produce ink. Then go to the third table and take the stiletto. Go to the middle desk. Find the book in your inventory and use it on the desk. Use the stiletto on the book and remove the gem

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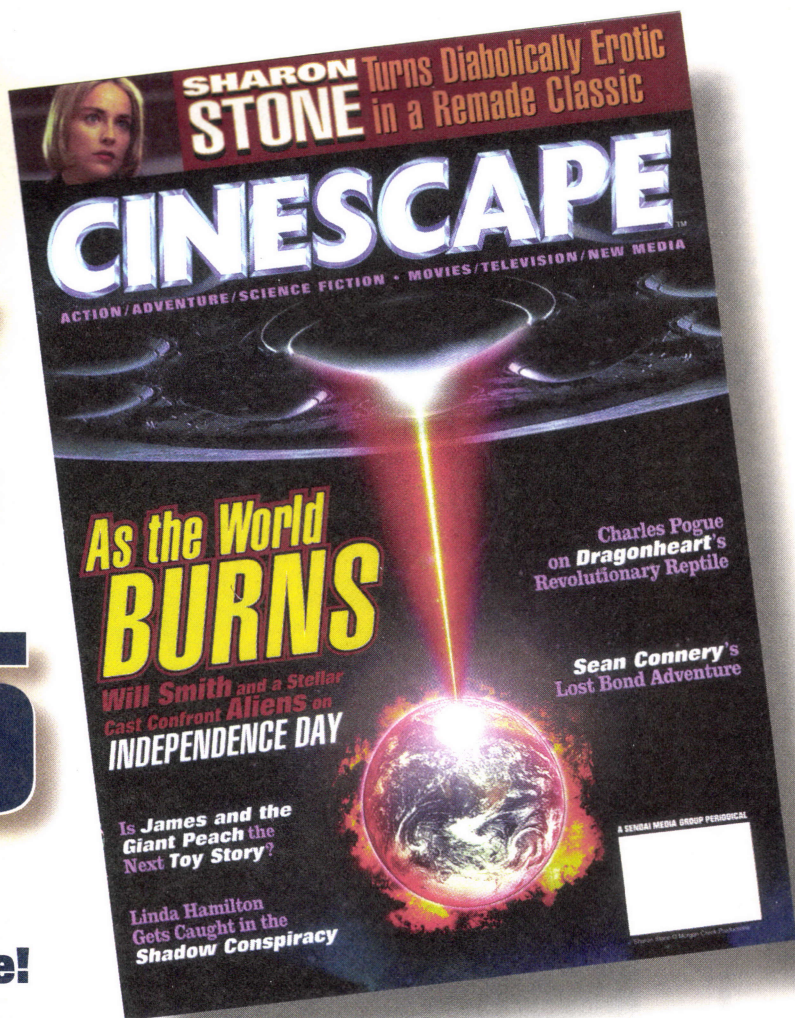
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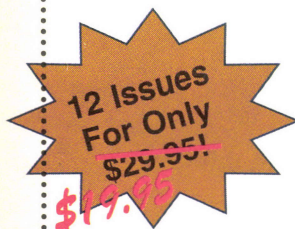
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lodged in it. You cannot accomplish this unless the book is on the desk. Stand in front of the white paper and use the ingredients needed to make ink. Use the water, spleen and the boneblack. Do not use the pitch. Now check your inventory. You should have a bowl of ink. Next, use the quill to copy the book onto the paper. When finished, save your adventure.

Time is now ticking quickly away. You must return the original book to the cage before the guard finds and kills you. Take the original book from the desk! Hurry Tibbs! Quickly make your way back to the cage. Stand in front of it. Positioning here is important. It will save you valuable time. When you are directly in front of the cage, "drop" the book into the cage. You must also leave the wooden box. To leave the box in the cage, "use" it. The door will close automatically. You must now run back into the scriptorium. Find your way to the torch on the wall to the right of the door. Stand directly in front of the torch and put on the frock. Hurry! Now, push the torch. The secret passage will close and the gray door will open. Stay alert, a monk will immediately enter the room. You must follow closely behind him to escape with your life intact. Whenever you make progress, save your game when possible. Remember, stay right behind him! One false move will get you killed. Keep following the monk. He will lead you outside and, at a certain point, you will be prompted to turn right at an open door. The monk will continue on. You made it to the hospital. Once inside, do not go out again. You know the routine Tibbs....save your game.

14. THE HOSPITAL

Walk to the left and take the pot on the floor. There is something inside the pot that you need. Throw the pot against the wall to break it and take the key. This key allows you to open the locked door to the left of the entrance. Enter and find the book on the table. Read it. You will learn how to produce a sleeping potion. Search the shelves in the room and take the ingredients you need. To make the potion, first use the empty test tube. Now use the ingredients in the order given to you from the book. You should now have a full test tube of green potion in your inventory. Leave this room. You will need to find four other rooms with closed doors. Try to find the tannery or the bakery next.

15. THE BAKERY

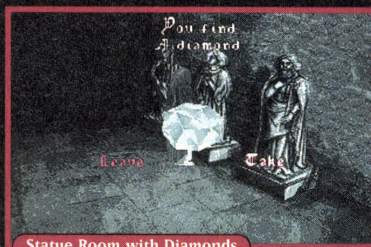
Search the table in this room and find the piece of bread. There is also a loaf in the fireplace. Take it too. Use your test tube of potion on the bread. Check your inventory and you should find a piece of green bread. You



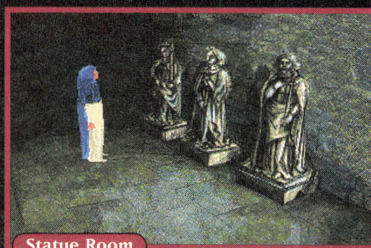
In Front of the Cage



Ink Ingredients



Statue Room with Diamonds



Statue Room



The Golden Heart

may eat the OTHER piece of bread. Remember to watch your health. You must keep your strength up. There are many warriors yet to face. You will need the bread with the potion for the templar's room. If you go into this room before you have the bread with the potion, you will die. Leave the bakery and find the tannery if you haven't already.

16. THE TANNERY

Sometimes tools intended for one thing can be used for something else. Tools for cutting leather might have another use in your quest. Search the room and find the leather cutter. Leave this room and find the templar's room. Save your game.

17. THE TEMPLAR'S ROOM

As soon as you open the door, quickly throw the green bread in. The templar will take it and fall asleep. Examine the statue in this room and use the leather cutter on the statue. You will find another gem—a ruby. That is all you need here. Beware, there are two guards outside this room. Arm yourself before you exit. Save your game.

These guards are very strong. It may take some doing to dispose of these two. Once you have eliminated them, look on the floor. One of the guards should have left you a set of keys. If you haven't eaten your bread, do so now.

Continue to use the leather cutter on ALL statues in the hospital. Don't forget to go back to rooms where you have already been. With most statues, you should find a gem. You will need to find a total of eight gems. Three of which are diamonds. The diamonds are tough to find. The room where they are is barely visible. Go back and face the doorway of the bakery, the hidden doorway is to the right of the statue next to the bakery. You will find three statues in this room. Use the leather cutter and get the three diamonds. Find the last locked door. It will be the mortuary. Use the key the guard left you.

18. THE MORTUARY

Of all my travels I have never encountered a problem such as this. Stand to the right of the corpse and "push" his heart. A golden heart will appear. Take it. Now that you have ALL the gems, use the golden heart on the statue in the corner. After your offering, turn around and you will see that another image has appeared. Quickly move to the image and take the goblet it is offering you.

You will become drunk and be captured. Do not be fearful, it is the only way to reach Juliette.

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19. THE TORTURE CELL

Move the wheel to your left Tibbs, and this will ignite the rope and enable your release. The guard that quickly approaches you must be killed and you have no weapons. You must fight him with your hands and feet. With the guard defeated, gather your possessions from the table. The torches on the sides of the wheel hold the secret to a passageway. Go to the torches and take them. Now reverse their positions. The passage will open for you. Enter the passage.

Take the first left and continue straight to the end of the corridor, then go right.

20. THE OLD TEMPLAR'S CELL

Show the templar your ring. Once the templar dies, take the objects he leaves behind. Look in the chest. Take the items in the chest. You will notice that Wolfgang is watching. Take the strange red stone, this is the device through which Wolfgang is spying on you. To rid yourself of him, use the leather pouch and then use the strange red stone. You must have the leather pouch in your possession to do this. Go to the gold chalice on the table and take the eight gems inside. Now use your ring on the outlined door in this room. It will lead you out.

Find your way to the stairs that lead you to the library. There is a guard at the library entrance. He is from the depths of hell. You must first wear the frock before you climb the stairs.

21. THE LIBRARY

At the top, the door will open. Run quickly to your left to the end of the hallway and turn right to find a small alcove. Now you have a moment to spare to arm yourself. Use your sword. The monk is a devil in disguise. He is quick and he is merciless. You must have enough life energy left to effectively defeat this creature. Once you do, there is another right behind him. Use the down arrow key for the most accurate and effective blows.

You have been weakened by this encounter and it is now imperative that you protect your health if you are to survive and save Juliette.

22. THE REFECTORY

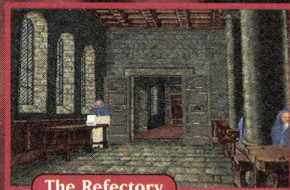
Find the large double doors. They lead you into the refectory. Walk to the end of the table at your right. Again, you must be precise in your movements here. No need to hurry, just be precise. Walk to the end of the table at your right. Make sure you stand behind the table at the end. Take the plates stacked before you. Stay at the end of the table! You must now USE the plates in order to continue. If you do not, you will be killed. You should now be holding the plates. Begin walking to the



Torture Chamber



Wolfgang watches you in old Templar's Room



The Refectory



The Cemetery

opposite end of the room to the kitchen. Enter the kitchen and put the stack of plates on the table to your right. Now move to the shelves. Take the tray on the shelf. Turn around and find the fireplace. Place the tray at the end of the counter by the fireplace. Walk back to the shelves. You will see a guard come and take the tray. While he is busy eating, walk past him into the room from where he came. You will see two tombs. Go to the closest tomb and use each gem on the tomb until one works and you find a morningstar (weapon). Take it and do the same to the next tomb. You should find a key there. Save your game. Be armed, the guard is finished eating and he will attack you.

You must kill him. Use the morningstar since you will need the added strength that the weapon provides to defeat him. Right after you do, proceed to the door in the kitchen. The key from the tomb will open this door. Beware Tibbs, it is the key to Hell!

Unfortunately, it is here that I must tell you that I cannot continue on. My powers of foresight and knowledge have faded through these travels and I am far too weak. The rest of your adventure may be uncertain, but you have learned much and I trust your wisdom and courage will guide you safely through the next phase. I can say that I feel you are close to your true love. Trust your heart and guard your health as best you can.

Hurry! Poor Juliette's life grows shorter with every passing moment and every passing breath. Godspeed. CGR

-Leslie Beyer

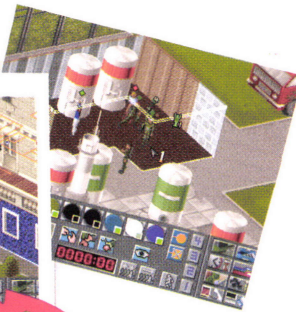
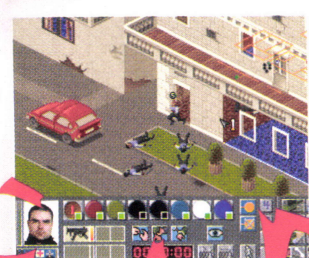
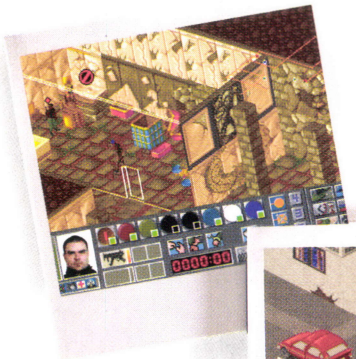
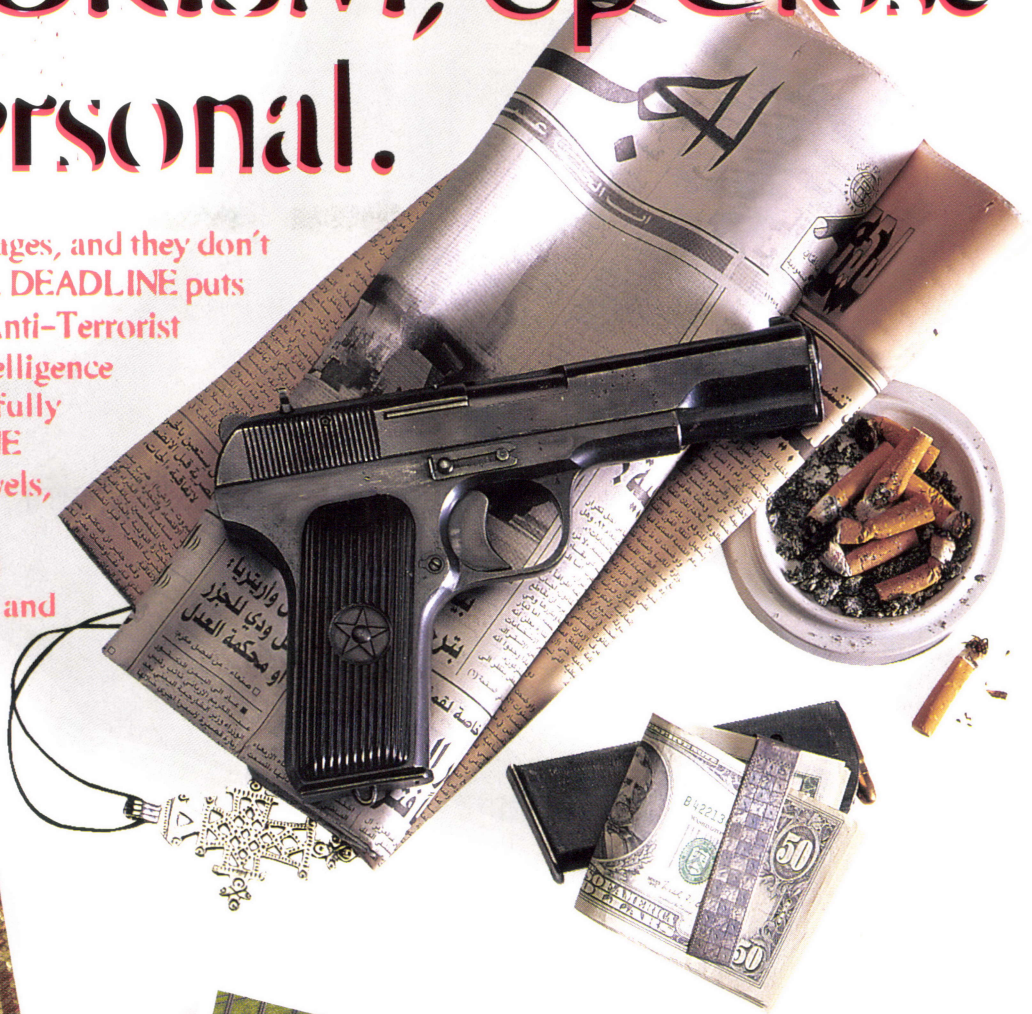
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